



THE  
MISCELLANEOUS WORKS  
OF  
ADAM CLARKE, LL.D., F.A.S.

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VOL. VI.

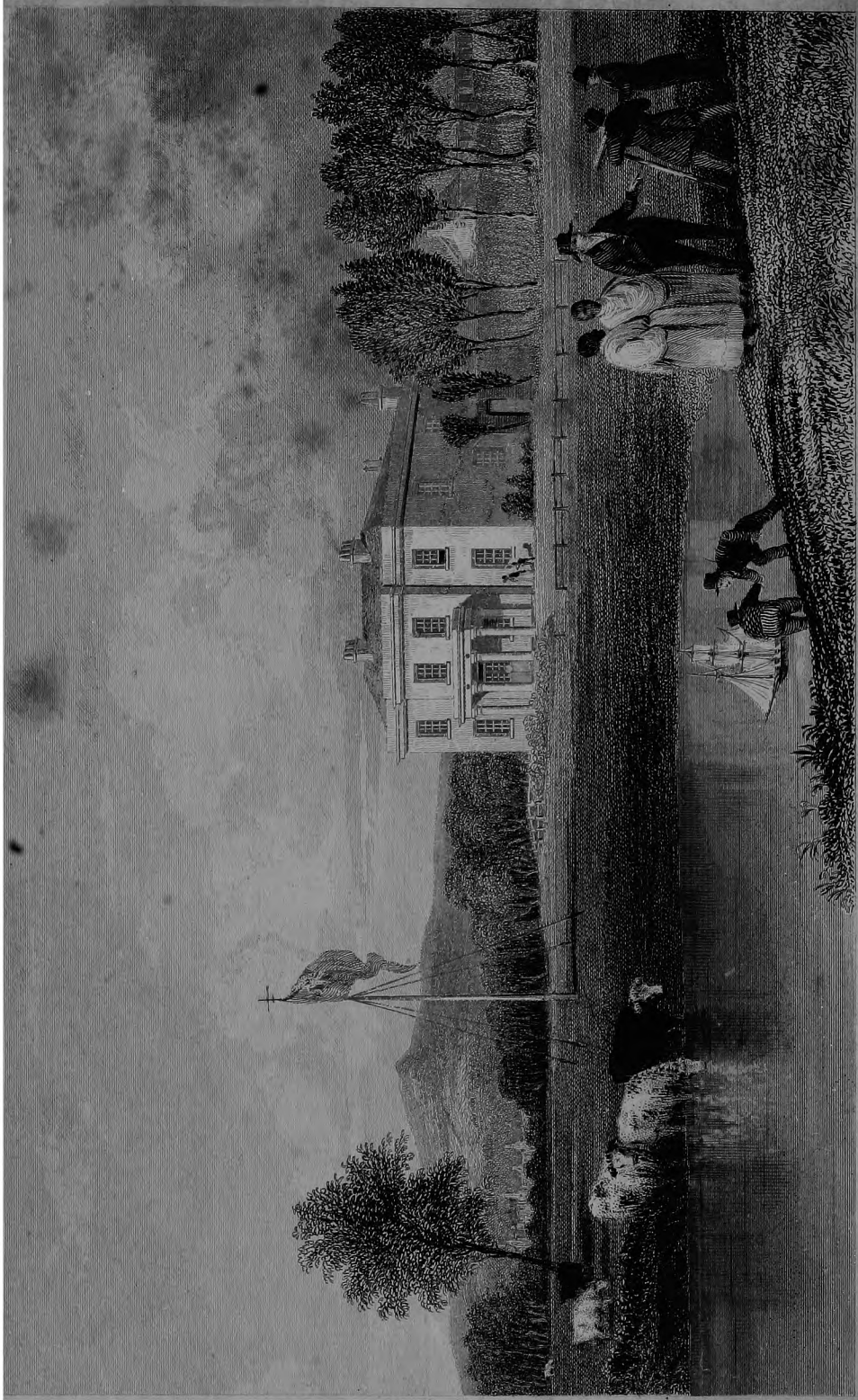
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SERMONS.

VOL. II.

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MDCCCXXXVI.



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*Millbrook*  
The Residence of Dr. Adam Clarke.

DISCOURSES  
ON  
VARIOUS SUBJECTS  
RELATIVE TO THE  
BEING AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD;  
AND HIS WORKS,  
IN CREATION, PROVIDENCE, AND GRACE.

BY ADAM CLARKE, LL.D., F.A.S., &c.

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IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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## CONTENTS OF VOLUME II.

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<i>Sermons.</i>	<i>Page.</i>
XVIII. The Lord's Prayer . . . .	1
XIX. The Traveller's Prayer . . . .	38
XX. Death Unavoidable . . . .	60
XXI. Two Important Questions Answered . . . .	96
XXII. Acquaintance with God, and the Benefits which Result from it . . . .	126
XXIII. Love to God and Man, the Fulfilling of the Law and the Prophets . . . .	156
XXIV. The Wise Man's Counsels to his Pupil ; or the True Method of Giving, Receiving, and Profiting by Religious Instruction . . . .	180
XXV. Christ Crucified, a Stumbling-block to the Jews, and Foolishness to the Greeks . . . .	200
XXVI. Design and Use of Jewish <sup>s</sup> Sacrifices : that of Christ the Only Atonement . . . .	239
XXVII. The Prayer of Agur . . . .	260
XXVIII. The Glory of the Latter Days . . . .	292
XXIX. Observations on the Being and Providence of a God . . . .	323
XXX. The Corruption that is in the World through Lust . . . .	354
XXXI. Divine Revelation . . . .	387
XXXII. The Love of God to a Lost World . . . .	426



# SERMONS.

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## SERMON XVIII.

### THE LORD'S PRAYER.

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MATTHEW vi. 5—13.

5. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are ;  
for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the  
corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily,  
I say unto you, they have their reward.
6. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when  
thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret  
and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.
7. But when ye pray use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do ;  
for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.
8. Be not ye therefore like unto them ; for your Father knoweth  
what things ye have need of before ye ask him.
9. After this manner therefore pray ye : Our Father, which art in  
heaven, hallowed be thy name ;
10. Thy kingdom come ; thy will be done in earth as it is in  
heaven ;
11. Give us this day our daily bread ;
12. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors ;
13. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil ; for  
thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.  
Amen.

IN speaking on this subject, I shall first consider,—

I. The nature of prayer.

II. The object of prayer.

III. The end aimed at by praying.

IV What we are to avoid in order to pray successfully.

V. Those petitions that contain all that is necessary for the welfare of the supplicant in the Lord's Prayer.

VI. The doxology.

I. Of the nature of prayer ; or, an answer to the simple but very important question, *What is prayer ?*

Prayer has been defined, “An offering of our desires to God for things lawful and needful, with a humble confidence to obtain them through the alone merits of Christ, to the praise of the mercy, truth, and power of God ;” and its parts are said to be “invocation, adoration, confession, petition, pleading, dedication, thanksgiving, and blessing.” Though the definition be imperfect, yet, as far as it goes, it is not objectionable ; but the parts of prayer, as they are called (except the word *petition*) have scarcely any thing to do with the nature of prayer ; they are in general separate acts of devotion, and attention to them in what is termed *praying*, will entirely mar it, and destroy its efficacy.

It was by following this division that long prayers have been introduced among Christian congregations, by means of which the spirit of devotion has been lost ; for where such prevail most, listlessness and deadness are the principal characteristics of the religious services of the people ; and these have often engendered formality, and frequently a total indifference to religion. Long prayers prevent kneeling, for it is utterly impossible for man or woman to keep on their knees during the time such last. Where these prevail, the people either stand

or sit. Technical prayers, I have no doubt, are odious in the sight of God ; for no man can be in the spirit of devotion who uses such ; it is a drawing nigh to God with the lips, while the heart is, almost necessarily, far from him.

The original words in ancient languages generally afford the best definitions of the things of which they are the signs ; for as names were first given from necessity, and for convenience, terms were used which were borrowed from actions by which some remarkable property or properties of the subject were expressed. “For the imposition of names cannot be considered as arbitrary, but for some cause, on account of some eminent property, attribute, or action ; in short, for some reason appertaining to the thing which bears that name ; and hence,” says a learned philologist, “the verb and the adjective, between which there is a great affinity, generally point out the nature of the noun ; the one expressing its action and state, the other its property and quality. Hence, too, it appears the verb is the proper radix or root of the word ; for when a noun cannot be brought to a verb, it will be impossible to have a clear conception of its meaning ; and it will appear to be a mere arbitrary sign.”

Let us apply these observations to the original words of the text : *When thou prayest*, Όταν προσευχῇ. The word προσευχῇ, *prayer*, is compounded of προς, *to or with*, and εὐχῇ, a *vow* ; because, to pray aright, a man binds himself to God as by a vow, to live to his glory, if he will grant him his grace. The verb εὐχομαι signifies to *pour out prayers or vows*, from εὐ, *well*, and χέω, *I pour out*, probably alluding to the offerings or libations which were poured out before or on the altar. As in ancient times prayers were scarcely ever offered to the Divine Being without sacrifice or oblation, hence the reason

the word which is used to express prayer. Sacrifice was therefore understood to be essentially necessary to prayer ; because the suppliant, conscious of his guilt, brought a sacrifice to make atonement for it ; and to this he joined fervent prayer, that the Object of his worship would accept the sacrifice in reference to the purpose for which it was offered. And on the other hand, sacrifice always implied prayer—prayer, that the evils deserved and dreaded might be turned away, the transgression pardoned by which the guilt was incurred, and divine strength obtained by which future transgression might be prevented ; and all this would be naturally accompanied with serious resolutions to avoid the evil and choose the good in future ; and to live so as not to displease him from whom the suppliant sought so great a favour : hence *the vow*.

Now these prayers, resolutions, and vows were all founded on the merit of the sacrifice which was brought, and not on account of the mere act of praying, or the words produced. As prayer, therefore, which necessarily implied the earnest desire of the heart to receive mercy from the hand of God to pardon sin, and grace to help in time of need, is ever accompanied with a due sense of sin, and the suppliant's total unworthiness of the blessings he requests, knowing that he has forfeited life and every good by his transgressions, and cannot depend on anything that he has done, is doing, or can do, to atone for his sin ; therefore he brings his offering ; and the offering of sacrifice is essential to the completion or perfection of his prayer, and the gracious answer which he solicits. This has been the true notion of prayer, not only among the Jews, but even among all heathen nations, where any sacrificial system prevailed ; and should be the notion of it in all Christian countries, where the passion and death of JESUS CHRIST are considered a

sacrifice for sin ; and this is the light in which they are universally exhibited, both in the Old and New Testaments.

A proper idea of prayer, therefore, is “the pouring out the soul before God, with the hand of faith placed on the head of the Sacrificial Offering, imploring mercy, and presenting itself a free-will offering unto God, giving up body, soul, and spirit, to be guided and governed, as may seem good to his heavenly wisdom ; desiring only perfectly to love him, and serve him with all its powers, at all times, while it has a being.”

As a man, to pray aright, must be in this spirit, must feel himself *wholly dependant on God*, therefore prayer is the *language of dependance* : he who prays not is endeavouring to live independently of God : this was the first curse, and continues to be the great curse of mankind. In the beginning Satan said, “Eat this fruit, and ye shall then be as God ;” that is, ye shall be independent. The man hearkened to his voice—ate the fruit—sin entered into the world ; and, notwithstanding the full manifestation of the deception, the ruinous system is still pursued ; man will, if possible, live independently of God ; hence he either prays not at all, or uses the language without the spirit of prayer.

## II. Who or what is the object of prayer ?

As the object of true faith is God, so is he the object of *prayer* ; but the *word of God*, and especially his *promises*, are also the objects of prayer ; for it is the fulfilment of the promises contained in that word, unto which the prayer of faith must have its eye directed. But even the Scriptures are but a secondary object of faith and prayer ; they, it is true, contain God’s truth ; but they cannot accomplish themselves ; God alone can give them their fulfilment. Both the understanding and the will are here engaged, for truth is the object of the



understanding ; as good is the object of the will, we believe the truth, in order to get the good. Therefore the Lord saith, "Take with you words, and come unto the Lord ; say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously ; so will we render the calves of our lips ;" that is, we shall present him the sacrifice promised, and give him due praise for the mercy he sends. See Hos. xiv. 2, and Heb. xiii. 15.

God, therefore, on his mercy-seat, is the Object of prayer ; and to fix the mind, and prevent it from wavering, the supplicant should consider him under such attributes as are best suited to his own state and wants. There are *three* general views which may be taken of this divine Object : *infinite Wisdom, infinite Power, infinite Goodness*. There are few blessings we want that do not come from one or other of these three sources : we are either ignorant, and want instruction ; weak, and need power ; or wretched, and need mercy. As we feel, so we should pray ; and in order to feel aright, and pray successfully, we should endeavour to find out our state ; to discover our most pressing wants ; and to find these, we need much light, which the Holy Spirit alone can impart : hence, strange as it may appear, we must pray before we begin to pray. We must pray for light to discover our state, that our eye may affect our heart, in order to go successfully to the great Object of prayer, to get our wants summarily supplied. We must pray first to see what we need, and then we shall pray to get our wants supplied.

+ III. What is the end proposed by our praying ?

The end is, *to get our souls finally saved* ; to become wiser and better ; to answer the end for which God has made and preserved us ; viz., to love him with all our soul, mind, and strength, and to live only to glorify him. The end for which Christ came into the world, and shed

his blood for us, viz., that we might be saved from our sins; that we might bear the image of the heavenly Adam, as we have borne the image of the earthly Adam; and show forth the virtues of him who has called us from darkness into his marvellous light; to follow him, not only in his immaculate life, but to “go about doing good;” and, as far as we can, live to promote the happiness of our fellow-creatures. In a word, to regain here that state of holiness from which we have fallen—the image and likeness of God; for in this image and likeness we were created. From these we have fallen; and to restore us to these, the Lord Jesus was incarnated for us, and died, the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to heaven.

This is the great and important end for which we should pray, and for which we should live. Life, at longest, is but short, and every hour has work for itself; therefore there is no time to spare; not one hour that we can afford to lose; and, besides, life is uncertain; we cannot assure ourselves of one day or hour; no, we cannot be certain that we shall live beyond the present moment. What need have we then to pray; to call incessantly upon God, that the great work for eternity may be speedily completed, that when he doth appear, we may be found of him in peace, without spot, and without blame, and have an entrance into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. Let us live, then, in order to die well; and live well, that we may live to all eternity! No man is fit to live, that is not fit to die; and no man is either fit to die safely, or to live usefully, who is not living to God. Hence the absolute necessity for prayer, that we may receive mercy and grace.

IV What are we to avoid, in order to pray successfully?

Our Lord answers this question, by showing us that

there are three evils which we must avoid in prayer.

1. Hypocrisy. 2. Mental dissipation. 3. Much speaking, or unmeaning repetition.

1. HYPOCRISY.—“When ye pray, be not as the hypocrites.”

The word *hypocrite* signifies one who *personates another*—a counterfeit, a dissembler—one who would be thought to be different from what he really is ; who, although he is not religious, wishes to be thought so ; and performs as many duties of it as he can, and in the most ostentatious way, in order that others may be persuaded that the character which he assumes is genuine ; and that he is a true follower of God, though he has nothing of religion but the outside.

The Jewish hypocrites “loved to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they might be seen of men.” What were called the phylacterical prayers of the Jews were long ; and the canonical hours obliged them to repeat those prayers wherever they happened to be at such hours ; and so full were they of a vain-glorious hypocrisy, that they are said to have contrived to be overtaken in the streets and market-places by the canonical hours, that they might be seen by the people, and applauded for their great and exemplary devotion. As they had no piety but what was outward, they endeavoured to let it fully appear, that they might make the most of it among the people. They prayed standing, for it would not have answered their end to kneel before God ; for then they might have been unnoticed by men, and consequently have lost that reward of which they were in pursuit—the applause of the multitude. I have seen some rabbins, the most celebrated in Europe, walk the streets of a great city, uttering in the most solemn manner their prayers, with the head and eyes frequently turned towards heaven,

apparently unconscious of those who met them in the streets. These might have been sincere, but their conduct appeared very similar to that of their ancient brethren, which our Lord here reprehends.

But persons professing Christianity may be equally hypocritical, though in a different way: all showy religion is a hypocritical religion. Imposing rites and ceremonies, calculated merely to blind the eyes of the understanding, by exciting carnal feelings—speaking to the animal passions instead of to the mind, in order to please men, and make their party strong—is hypocrisy, abominable hypocrisy in the sight of God. All ministers and others, who study to use fine expressions in their prayers, rather complimenting than praying to God, rank high among the hypocrites; and instead of being applauded by men, should be universally abhorred by their congregations. That prayer which is the genuine effusion of a heart deeply impressed with its own necessities, and the presence of God, is invariably as simple as it is fervent and unostentatious.

2nd. Our Lord warns us against *mental dissipation*. “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet,” &c. Though this exhortation may particularly concern *private* prayer, yet there is a sense in which it may be applied to prayers in *public* also. The address is very emphatic and impressive, *Σὺ δὲ ὅταν προσευχῇ εἰσελθε εἰς τὸ ταμεῖον σου*, “But *thou* (whosoever thou art, Jew, Pharisee, or Christian), when thou prayest, enter into thy closet.” Prayer is the most secret intercourse of the soul with God, and, as it were, the conversation of one heart with another. The world is too profane and treacherous to be of the party and in the secret; we must shut the door against it, with all the affairs that busy and amuse it. Prayer requires retirement, at least of the heart; for this may be properly termed the closet

in the house of God; which house the body of every real Christian is. So St. Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 16. To this closet we must always retire, even in public worship, and in the midst of company. The very eyes should be guarded; they often affect the heart in such a way, as to mar and render unprofitable this most solemn act of devotion. The objects that they see will present images to the mind, which call off or divide the thoughts, and produce that wandering of heart so frequently complained of by many religious people, whose own unguarded eyes and thoughts are the causes of those wanderings which spoil their devotions. I never could understand how any man can have a collected mind, or proper devotion in prayer, who, while he is engaged in it, has his eyes open; not, indeed, fixed on one point, but wandering through the house, beholding the evil and the good. He must be distracted, and his prayers such, unless technical, or got by heart: then, indeed, he may say his prayers, but he cannot pray them. To fix the heart, is it not well to get this impression fixed deeply in the mind, "I am praying to that God who, in his infinite condescension, calls himself my Father; and he 'seeth in secret:—every feeling, apprehension, volition, and operation of the heart is under his eye?" A sense of the divine presence has a wonderful tendency to quiet and fix the heart.

3rd. Our Lord guards us against *vain repetition*—using unmeaning words, or words expressing no sense which the heart at the time apprehends. Saying the same things over and over again, generally to fill up the time, or, as our Lord states, under the supposition that they shall be "heard for their much speaking." Our Lord's words are, *μη βαττολογησητε*, "Do not battologise." "This word," says an ancient Greek grammarian, "came from one Battus, who made very prolix hymns, in which the

same idea frequently occurred." The following observations on this point, by the late very learned Mr. Gilbert Wakefield, I have ever admired: "A frequent repetition of awful and striking words may often be the result of earnestness and fervour, see Dan. ix. 3—20; but great length of prayer, which will of course involve much sameness and idle repetition, naturally creates fatigue and carelessness in the worshipper, and seems to suppose ignorance or inattention in the Deity; a fault against which our Lord more particularly wishes to secure them, see ver. 8;" and he illustrates this from the *Heautontimorumenos* of Terence:—

Ohe! jam desine deos, uxor, gratulando obtundere,  
 Tuam esse inventam gnatam; nisi illos ex tuo ingenio judicas  
 Ut nil credas *intelligere*, nisi idem dictum sit centies.

"Pray thee, my wife, cease from *stunning* the gods with thanksgivings because thy daughter is in safety: unless thou judgest of them from *thysself*, that they cannot *understand* a thing, unless they are told of it a *hundred times*."

I have said elsewhere, speaking on this subject, prayer requires more of the heart than of the tongue. The eloquence of prayer consists in the fervency of desire, and the simplicity of faith. The abundance of fine thoughts, studied and vehement motions, and the order and politeness of the expressions, are things which compose a mere human harangue, not a humble and Christian prayer. Our trust and confidence should proceed from that which God is able to *do* in us, and not from what we *say* to him. "It is abominable," said a Mohammedan, "that a person, offering up prayers to God, should say, 'I beseech thee by the glory of thy heavens,' or 'by the splendour of thy throne;' for conduct of this nature would lead to suspect that the Almighty derived glory from the heavens, whereas the heavens are created,

but God with all his attributes is eternal and inimitable."

It was a maxim among the Jews, that "He who multiplies prayer must be heard." And this would be correct, did it only refer to a continuance in prayer, or supplication : but the urging the same request, and speaking the same words repeatedly, without proper attention and reverence, is that which our Lord condemns, and of which, not only the heathens, but Jews and Mohammedans, are guilty ; and not a few of those called Christians, follow their steps.

It is not merely to tell God our wants, or to show him our state, that we are to pray ; for he knows this state, and these wants much better than ourselves ; but to get a suitable feeling of the pressure of these wants, and the necessity of having them supplied ; and this we obtain by looking into our hearts and lives ; for here particularly the eye affects the heart, and from the urgency of the necessity we feel excited to pray earnestly to God for his mercy : and our confessing them before him affects us still more deeply, induces us to be more fervent, and shows us that none but God can save and defend. And it is only to people who feel thus, that God will show his mercy. He who obtains this blessing of God after feeling that he was undone and lost without it, will duly prize it, watch over and keep it, and give God alone the whole glory of the grace that has brought him into this state of salvation.

V I come now to consider those petitions which contain all that is essentially necessary for the present and eternal welfare of the petitioner, which are all comprised in the LORD'S PRAYER.

#### THE PREFACE.

"After this manner, therefore, pray ye," ver. 9.

We learn from Luke xi. 1, that it was in consequence of a request of one of his disciples, that our Lord taught them this prayer : “And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us how to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father,” &c.

Forms of prayer were frequent among the Jews, and every public teacher gave one to his disciples. Some forms were drawn out to a considerable length, and from these abridgments were made : to the latter sort, the following prayer properly belongs ; and, consequently, besides its own important use, it is a plan for a more extended devotion.

What a satisfaction is it to learn from God himself, with what words and in what manner he would have us to pray to him, so that we might not pray in vain ! A king who draws up the petition which he allows to be presented to himself, has doubtless the fullest determination to grant the request. This is a most important consideration, and, properly viewed, will tend much to strengthen our faith when we pray to Him who has given us this form.

It may be justly said that we do not consider the value of this prayer ; the respect and attention which it requires, the preference to be given to it, and the spirit in which it should be offered. “Lord, teach us how to pray !” is a prayer necessary to prayer ; for unless we be divinely instructed in the manner, and influenced by the spirit of true devotion, even the prayer taught by Jesus Christ himself may be repeated without spiritual profit. They are to be pitied, who, in their public devotions, neglect this prayer. To say it is not enjoined thus, is a pitiful objection. Christ used it as it is, and taught his disciples so to use it. Though capable of great exten-



sion, yet there is no evidence that any such public use was made of it. If it contain only the principles of prayer, and the model according to which our prayers should be formed, he who taught knows best what is contained in these principles ; and when in simplicity and godly sincerity we offer to him these very principles, in which he will ever recognize his own hand and his own heart, he will not fail to give us those blessings which are included under these petitions, even to their utmost extent.

But even they who use it in their public devotions, seem to use it in the wrong place ; should we not begin our addresses to God with this prayer ? and then, after that manner, continue our requests to a reasonable length. But, whether used in the beginning, middle, or end, let it never be forgotten.

OUR FATHER.—It was a maxim of the Jews, that a man should not pray alone, but join with the church ; by which they particularly meant, that whether alone, or in the synagogue, he should use the plural number, as comprehending all the followers of God. Hence they say, “ Let none pray the short prayer ”—i. e., as they expound it, the prayer in the singular, but in the plural number.

This prayer was evidently made in an especial manner for the children of God ; and hence we are taught to say, not *my* Father, but *our* Father. “ The heart of a child of God is a brotherly heart, in respect of all other Christians : it asks nothing but in the spirit of unity, fellowship, and Christian charity, desiring that for its brethren, which it asks for itself.”

The word *Father*, placed here at the beginning of the prayer, includes two grand ideas, which should serve for a foundation to all our petitions : 1. That tender and respectful love which we should feel for God, such as that

which well-bred children feel for their fathers. 2. That strong confidence in God's love to us, such as fathers have for children. Thus all the petitions in this prayer stand in the strictest reference to the word *father*; the three first, to the love we have for God, and the four last, to that confidence which we have in the love he bears to us. The relation in which we stand to this first and best of Beings, dictates to us reverence for his person, zeal for his honour, obedience to his will, submission to his dispensations and chastisements, and resemblance to his nature. When we consider that he is our Father to whom we come, and that it is he who bids us come, we may indeed come with boldness to the throne of grace, and expect all that he has promised, and all that we need. O what a privilege is contained in this consideration !

*Which art in heaven ; ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς*, “WHO art in the heavens.” The word *which* properly belongs to *things*, though it was often formerly used instead of *who*, which refers to *persons* ; but *who* is certainly the most proper in this place ; for there is no ambiguity in the original article. But it is a matter of little moment, in our addresses to that Being who, in his own person, is neither masculine, feminine, nor neuter. He is *illud inexprimibile*—that Ineffable, that Inconceivable,—as Cicero expresses the Supreme Unknown Being. He has, however, called himself *our Father*, and commanded us so to address him. We see him therefore as our Father, and lose sight of all other distinctions.

*In heaven, or—in the heavens.* This phrase in Scripture seems used to express :

1st. His OMNIPRESENCE. “The heaven of heavens cannot contain thee,” 1 Kings viii. 27 ; that is, Thou fillest immensity.

2ndly, His MAJESTY and DOMINION over his creatures.

"Art thou not God in heaven, and RULEST thou not over ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE HEATHEN?" 2 Chron. xx. 6.

3rdly, His POWER and MIGHT. "Art thou not God in heaven, and in thy hand is there not POWER and MIGHT, so that no creature is able to withstand thee?" 2 Chron. xx. 6. "Our God is in HEAVEN, and hath done whatsoever he pleased," Ps. cxv. 3.

4thly, His OMNISCIENCE. "The Lord's throne is in HEAVEN: his eyes behold, his eye-lids try the children of men," Ps. xi. 4. "The Lord looketh down from heaven; he BEHOLDETH ALL THE SONS OF MEN," Ps. xxxiii. 13.

5thly, His infinite PURITY and HOLINESS. "Look down from thy HOLY habitation, from heaven," &c. Deut. xxvi. 15. "Thou art the high and lofty One, who inhabitest eternity, whose name is HOLY," Isai. lvii. 15.

So that when we address him as our Father, who is in the heavens, we should remember these things as descriptive of the Being, and the attributes of that Being whom we address.

#### FIRST PETITION.

*Hallowed be thy name !* ver. 9.

This may be considered as a petition with which we begin our prayer. Now that we are about to address Thee, may we conceive aright of thy majesty, and come before thee with the deepest reverence and humility !

The word *sanctify* literally means to *make holy*. In this sense we can never apply it to God ; but the original word *ἀγιασθῆτω* comes from *α*, which signifies *negative*, and *γη*, *the earth* ; a thing separated from the earth, or from earthly purposes and employments. As the word *sanctified*, or *hallowed*, in Scripture, is frequently used for the consecration of a thing or person, to a holy use or office ; as the Levites, the first-born, the tabernacle, the

temple, their different utensils, &c. ; which were all set apart from every earthly, common, or profane use, and employed wholly in the service of God ; so the divine majesty may be said to be sanctified by us, in analogy to those things ; viz., when we in our hearts separate him from, and in our minds, conception, and desires, exalt him above earth, and all created things. When, in our addresses to him, we thus separate him from all human passions—from changeableness, fickleness, and caprice. When we represent him to ourselves not inexorable, but easy to be entreated ; not unwilling, but ready to save ; not giving to one more readily than to another who is in the same necessitous circumstances ; not as being unwilling now to hear and grant, though he may be willing at some future time : for these things seem to attribute to him not only human passions, but some of the worst of those passions. This sanctifying is a thing of great consequence ; for improper and unworthy views of God often prevent or suspend the exercise of faith ; and we too frequently imagine God to be something like to ourselves ; irresolute in mind, slow to resolve, difficult to be entreated, feeling an unreasonable attachment to some, while he feels an abhorrence, equally unreasonable or capricious, of others. These views are unworthy of God ; He is not like man—He is not like ourselves. To any praying soul he is now, and ever must be, the fountain of mercy, the well-spring of salvation—always ready to pour out the streams of blessedness to all them that call upon him ; and ever—“ever more ready to hear than we are to pray, and ever wont to give more than we desire or deserve.”

Further, God's NAME signifies God himself, with all the attributes of his Divine nature : his power, mercy, goodness, justice, and truth ; and this name we may sanctify or hallow—

1st. With our lips ; when all our conversation is holy, and we speak of those things which are edifying, and meet to minister grace to the hearers.

2ndly. In our thoughts ; when we repress every rising evil, think chastely, repress all unholy, vain, and disorderly imaginations ; endeavouring to have all our tempers regulated by his grace and Spirit.

3rdly, In our lives ; when we begin, continue, and end all our works to his glory, having an eye to him in all we perform ; then every act of our common employment will, in his sight, be as an act of religious worship. It is possible so to eat and drink, that every meal we eat we may feel to be a sacramental repast.

4thly, We may hallow his name in our families, when we endeavour to bring up our children in his discipline and admonition ; instructing also our servants in the way of righteousness, and by having the Holy Scriptures read, and prayers daily offered in our dwellings. And thus our houses may become houses of God, tabernacles or temples where prayers and thanksgivings are daily laid upon that altar that sanctifies the gift.

5thly, We hallow God's name, and honour him in a particular calling or business, when we separate the falsity, deception, and lying, commonly practised, from it ; buying and selling as in the sight of the holy and just God ; not mixing superior and inferior articles together, as multitudes do, and selling the mass as pure and unmixed, and of the first quality. How will such dealers appear before God ?

#### SECOND PETITION.

“Thy kingdom come,” ver. 10.

The meaning of this petition we may collect from the ancient Jews, and from their expectation. “He prays

not at all (say they) in whose prayers there is no mention of the *kingdom of God*." "Let him cause his *kingdom* to reign, and his redemption to flourish; and let the Messiah speedily *come* and deliver his people!" The *kingdom of Christ*, his government in Judea, and his deliverance of them from the Roman yoke, was that which *they* expected; *we* know that the great King of this kingdom is come, and that the government is on his shoulder; and of the increase of his government and kingdom there shall be no end. We should pray that it may increase more and more, for God has promised that it shall be exalted above all kingdoms, Dan. vii. 14—27. And that it shall overthrow all others, and be at last the universal empire, see Isai. ix. 7. The *kingdom of heaven* and the *kingdom of God* mean, as used in the Scriptures, the *dispensation of infinite mercy, and manifestation of eternal truth by Christ Jesus*; producing the true knowledge of God, accompanied with that worship which is pure and holy, worthy of him who is its institutor and object.

God's government of the world is called his *kingdom*, and it is called so because it has its *laws*—all the precepts of the gospel; its *subjects*—all who believe in Christ Jesus; and its KING—the Sovereign of heaven and earth.

"The kingdom of heaven," says the apostle, "is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," Rom. xiv. 17. It does not consist in the gratification of sensual passions or worldly ambition, it is the *government of God* among men, a counterpart of the kingdom of glory upon the earth. It is righteousness, without mixture of sin; peace, without strife or contention; joy in the Holy Ghost—spiritual joy or happiness, without mixture of misery. And all this it

is possible, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to enjoy here below. "How then does heaven differ from this state?" It makes the *RIGHTEOUSNESS eternal*, the *PEACE eternal*, and the *JOY eternal*. This constitutes the *HEAVEN OF HEAVENS*. In the world, his followers may have tribulation, but in him they shall have peace ; and he has spoken these words unto us that "our joy may be full." We should pray that *this kingdom* may speedily come into the nation at large—into the whole earth—into our own neighbourhood and family—and into our own souls. Ever pray, and constantly look for *this kingdom*—it is *coming*—it is *at hand*—it is *among us* !

#### THIRD PETITION.

"Thy will be done," ver. 10.

This petition is properly added immediately after the preceding. For when the kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, is established in the heart, there is then an ample provision for the *fulfilment* of the divine *will*.

The *will of God* is infinitely wise, good, and holy ; to have it *done* among men, is to have infinite wisdom, goodness, and holiness diffused throughout the universe, and the earth filled with the fulness of God.

The will of God is the measure of all good ; when that is *done*, everything relative to the end and perfection of that thing or person is accomplished. With respect to the salvation of man, let us observe,—

1st. That the salvation of the soul is the result of *two wills* conjoined, the *will of God* and the *will of man*. If God do not *will* the salvation of man, man cannot be saved ; if man do not *will* the salvation which God has provided for him, he cannot be delivered from his sins.

2ndly. This petition certainly points out a *deliverance*

*from all sin*, for nothing that is unholy can consist with the *divine will*; and if this be fulfilled in man, surely sin shall be eradicated from the soul.

3rdly. This is farther evident from these words, “as it is in heaven;” i. e., as the angels do it; for they obey with all zeal, diligence, love, delight, and perseverance.

4thly. Does not the petition plainly imply that we may, through Christ strengthening us, live without sinning against God? Surely, the holy angels never mingle sin with their loving obedience; and as our Lord teaches us to pray, that we may do his will *here*, as the angels do in heaven, can it be thought he would put a petition in our mouths, the fulfilment of which is impossible?

5thly. This petition, thus understood, certainly overthrows the assertion, “There is no such state of purification to be attained here, in which it may be said, the soul is redeemed from sinful passions and desires.” It destroys this objection, for it is *on earth* that we are commanded to pray, that this *will*, which is our *sanctification*, may *be done*.

6thly. Our souls can never be truly happy till our *wills* are entirely subjected to, and become one with, the will of God.

7thly. How can any person offer this petition to his Maker, who thinks of nothing *less* than the performance of the will of God, and of nothing *more* than the doing his own?

Some see the mystery of the Holy Trinity in the *three* preceding petitions: The *first* being addressed to the FATHER, as the source of all holiness. The *second*, to the SON, who established the kingdom of God upon earth. The *third* to the HOLY SPIRIT, who by his energy works in men both to will and to perform.

To offer these *three petitions* with success at the throne of God, *three graces*, essential to our salvation, must be



brought into exercise ; and indeed the petitions themselves necessarily impose them.

FAITH ; "OUR FATHER." For he that cometh to God must believe that he is.

HOPE ; "Thy kingdom come." For this grace has for its objects things that are future.

LOVE ; "Thy will be done." For love is the incentive to and principle of all obedience to God and beneficence to man.

The man who can, with a truly enlightened mind and clear conscience, say from the bottom of his heart, "Thy WILL be done," has attained to a very high degree of Christian perfection.

#### THE FOURTH PETITION.

"Give us this day our daily bread," ver. 11.

God has made man dependant on himself for meat, drink, life, breath, and all things !

And as he has given us no promise that we shall live till *to-morrow*, we have only to seek for a *daily* provision ; we should live to-day, and trust for to-morrow, knowing that he who lives every present day for eternity is always prepared to meet his God.

But the word *ἐπιουσιον* has greatly perplexed critics and commentators. I find upwards of thirty different explanations of this word. It is found in no Greek writer before the evangelists ; and Origen says expressly, *ἀλλ' εἰκε πεπλασθαι ὑπο τῶν Εὐαγγελιστῶν*, "but it was formed by the evangelists themselves." The interpretation of Theophylact, one of the best of the Greek Fathers, has always appeared to me to be the best, *Ἄρτος ἐπὶ τῇ οὐσίᾳ καὶ συστάσει ἀνταρκῆς*, "Bread necessary for our substance and support ;" viz., that quantity and quality of food which is necessary to support our health and strength, by being changed into the substance of our bodies. The

word *ἐπιουσιον*, is compounded of *επι* and *ουσια*, upon or above our substance ; that is, the bread that is proper for the support of the human system.

There may be an allusion here to the custom of travellers in Asiatic countries, who were wont to reserve a part of the food given them the preceding evening, to serve for their breakfast or dinner the next day. But as this was not sufficient for the whole day, they were therefore obliged to depend on the providence of God for the additional supply. In Luke xv. 12, 13, *ουσια* signifies what a person has to live on, his whole patrimony, be it more or less ; and nothing can be more natural than to understand the compound word *ἐπιουσιος*, of that additional supply which the traveller needs to complete the provision necessary for a day's eating, over and above what he had in his possession. See Harmer.

After all, the word is so very peculiar and expressive, and seems to have been made on purpose by the evangelists, in order to express their Lord's meaning, that more than mere bodily nourishment seems to be intended by it. Indeed, many of the ancients understood it as comprehending that *daily supply* of grace which the soul requires to keep it in spiritual health and vigour. He who uses this petition would do well to keep both meanings in view ; for he has both a body and soul which must depend on and receive from the bounty of God their support.

To make this more impressive, let us note a few particulars :—

1. God is the author and dispenser of all temporal as well as spiritual good.
2. We have merited nothing that is good at his hands ; and therefore must receive it as a free gift. “Give us to-day,” &c.
3. We must depend on him *daily* for support ; we are

not permitted to ask for anything for to-morrow ; give us to-day.

4. That petition of the ancient Jews is excellent : “ Lord, the necessities of thy people Israel are many, and their knowledge small, so that they know not how to disclose their necessities ; let it be thy good pleasure, to give to every man what sufficeth for food ” Thus they expressed their dependance, and left it to God to determine what was best and most suitable. We also must ask only what is necessary for our support, God having promised neither luxuries nor superfluities. Daily support for our bodies, and daily support for our souls, is all that we need, and this we should pray for ; and this we have reason to expect from a bountiful and merciful God ; and then leave it to him to employ that body and that soul as he pleases. We are his servants ; he calls us to labour ; and no man will expect his servants to fulfil their task, if they have nothing to eat. God, our heavenly Master, will give us bread for both worlds.

#### THE FIFTH PETITION.

“ And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,”  
ver. 12.

There is a little difference between this petition, as it stands here, and that in the parallel text, Luke xi. 4. Here it is, “ Forgive us our debts ” — *αφες ἡμιν τα οφειληματα ἡμων*, “ forgive us our debts,” or what we owe to thee, “ as we forgive our debtors,” *τοις οφειλεταις ἡμων*, those who stand indebted to us ; understanding in both cases, that both were insolvent. We are indebted to thee, but we cannot pay ; we are totally insolvent : if thou exact, we must be cast into the everlasting prison of hell. Our debtors are insolvent ; they have neither money nor goods : if we go to the extremity of the law, we may arrest their persons, sell them and theirs, or put them in

prison for life. We are touched with compassion for them, and therefore forgive them the debts they owe us. Be thou moved with compassion to us—we can pay thee nothing of the mighty debt we owe; therefore, in thy mercy forgive our debts to thee!

In the gospel of Luke it stands, *και αφες ημιν τας αμαρτιας ημων*, “and forgive us our sins”—our transgressions of thy law, which expose us to thy curse. But the next clause agrees in substance with the text in Matthew, *και γαρ αυτοι αφιμεν παντι οφειλοντι ημιν*—“for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us;” that is, all that are insolvent, and cannot pay, to such we forgive the debt, and do not, as the law would authorize, sell the person, or throw him into prison, where he must lie for life.

In cases of debt, where the person was insolvent, the law empowered the creditor to “sell the debtor, and his wife, and his children, and all that he had,” to pay the debt, Matt. xviii. 25. Or to throw the debtor into prison, where he was to be detained till he had paid the uttermost farthing, Matt. v. 25, 26, xviii. 34.

Sin is here represented as a debt which we have contracted with God; and as our sins are many, they are represented as debts—whatever we have done, said, or thought, against the holy law of God, is a sin; or in other words, evil thoughts, including unholy and disorderly passions—evil words, whether blasphemous against God, or injurious to our fellows; evil acts, whether against the letter or spirit of the law, or against both—are sins, transgressions of the law, and consequently debts to divine justice. God made man that he might live to his glory, and gave him a law to walk by; and if, when he does anything that tends not to glorify God, he contracted a debt with divine justice, how much more is he debtor when he breaks the law by actual transgression! By the law of his creation man is bound, at

all times and places, to love God with all his soul, mind, heart, and strength ; and this love, which is the principle of obedience, must lead to every thought, appetite, purpose, word, and deed, by which God may be glorified ; and this every man owes to his Creator ; and this he could have done, had he never fallen from God by a transgression which he might have avoided. Ever since his fall, even the “thoughts of his heart have been evil, and that continually ;” and his words and actions have borne sufficient evidence of the depravity of his heart. Man is wholly sinful ; and in all his acts, a SINNER ; hence his debt—his inconceivable debt to his Maker. From these things the reasonableness of endless punishment has been argued : “All the attributes of God are reasons of obedience ; those attributes, in their number, as well as in their nature, are infinite ; every sin is an act of ingratitude or rebellion against all these attributes ; therefore, sin is infinitely sinful, and deserves endless punishment.” It is enough that the sinner is incapable of helping or renewing himself ; if he pass through the time of probation without seeking and finding the salvation of God, and die in his sin, where God is he can never come—he is incapable of glory ; and as his sinful nature continues its operations even in the place of torment, these are continual reasons why that punishment should be continued. When we can prove that the gospel shall be preached in hell, and offers of salvation, free, full, and present, be made to the *damned*, then we may expect that the *worm* that *dieth not* shall die ; and the *fire* that is *not quenched* shall burn out !

We are taught in this petition to ask the forgiveness of our sins and debts. Our Lord does not tell us to “fall down before the feet of our heavenly Master,” and say, “Have patience with me, I will pay thee all.” No. Of this payment, there is no hope ; the thing is impos-

sible. Man has nothing to pay; and if his sins and debts be not forgiven, they must be charged against him for ever, as he is absolutely insolvent, and so completely ruined in his moral constitution, that he is past work. If he be forgiven and set up anew, and his moral health restored, then he may, and will work, as a proof that his Lord has had mercy upon him, and not only pardoned his offences, but healed his spiritual diseases. Thus he will work, not to merit heaven, for this he must have as a free gift; as the kingdom of God, which is of infinite value, cannot be purchased with money—indeed he has none—what he has is his Lord's; and no man can purchase God's glory by God's grace. Forgiveness and glory must come from the free mercy of God in Christ; and how strange is it, we cannot have the old debt cancelled without contracting a new one as great as the old! But the credit here is transferred from justice to mercy!

While *sinner*s, we are in debt to infinite *justice*; when *pardoned*, in debt to endless *mercy*. And as a continuance in a state of grace necessarily implies a continual communication of mercy, so the debt goes on increasing *ad infinitum*! Strange economy in the divine providence, which, by rendering a man an infinite debtor, keeps him eternally dependant on his Creator! How good is God! And what does this state of dependance imply? A union with and a participation of the fountain of eternal goodness and felicity!

But there is a condition which God requires, in order to the forgiveness of sins—not an *equivalent* for his transgression; of this man is incapable—"Forgive our debts, as we forgive our debtors." It was a maxim among the ancient Jews, that no man should lie down on his bed without forgiving them that had offended him. "Forgive," says Christ, "and ye shall be forgiven—for, if ye

forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive yours." That man condemns himself to suffer eternal punishment, who makes use of this prayer with revenge and hatred in his heart. He who will not attend to a condition so advantageous to himself (remitting 100 pence to his debtor, that his own creditor may remit him 10,000 talents), is a madman, who, to oblige his neighbour to suffer an hour, is himself determined to suffer *everlastingly* !

This condition of forgiving our offending neighbours, though it cannot possibly merit anything, yet is *that condition*, without which God will pardon no man. The goodness and indulgence of God towards us, is the pattern we should follow in our dealings with others. If we take man for our exemplar we shall err, because our copy is a bad one, and our lives are not likely to be better than the copy we imitate. We should follow Christ, and be merciful as our Father who is in heaven is merciful ; surely he who wishes to learn to write cannot complain of the fairness of his copy ! Let us put a case here : Reader, hast thou a child or servant who has offended thee, and humbly asks forgiveness ? Hast thou a debtor or a tenant that is insolvent, and asks for a little longer time ? And hast thou not forgiven that child or servant ? Hast thou not given time to that debtor or tenant ? How then canst thou ever expect to see the face of a just and merciful God ? Thy child is banished or kept at a distance, thy debtor is thrown into prison, or thy tenant is sold up ; yet the child offered to fall at thy feet, and the debtor or tenant, utterly insolvent, prayed for a little longer time, hoping that God would enable him to pay thee all ; but to these things the stony heart and seared conscience paid no regard ! O monster of ingratitude ! Scandal to human nature, and reproach to God ! Go, and, if thou canst,

hide thyself—even in hell—from the face of the Lord ! Learn, therefore, to give and forgive—and never turn away thy face from any poor man ; so the face of God shall never be turned away from thee.

#### THE SIXTH PETITION.

“ And lead us not into temptation,” ver. 13.

The word *πειρασμον* may be here rendered *sore trial*, from *πειρω*, to *pierce through*, as with a *spear* or *spit* ; used so by some of the best Greek writers. *Bring us not into sore trial*—do not suffer us to be thus tried. This is a mere Hebraism, where God is represented as doing what he only permits to be done ; the word not only implies violent assaults from Satan, but also sorely afflicting circumstances, none of which we have yet grace enough to bear. This place was so understood by several of the primitive Fathers, who have added some such words as these, *quam ferre non possumus*, “ which we cannot bear.”

The word *temptation* is generally taken to express a strong excitement to *sin* ; but if the *leading of God* be considered literally here, this sort of temptation cannot be meant. St. James settles this point : “ Let no man say, when he is tempted, *πειραζομενος*, I am tempted of God, *απο του Θεου πειραζουαι* ; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man ;” James i. 13. Therefore trials and difficulties must be here intended, things which may come in the ordinary course of providence, and which the petitioner has not fortitude to meet, nor strength to bear ; and which God can either turn aside, or give extraordinary strength to support. Taking the word in its common acceptance, and that *lead us not* is to be understood, *do not permit us* to be overthrown by any devices of our adversaries, whether men or devils ; we are to observe that the prayer is not,



Do not permit us to be tempted ! This God will not answer to any man, for *temptation* is a part of our Christian warfare ; and Jesus, our Lord and pattern, was tempted, and sorely tempted too ; and has, by his temptation, showed us how we may foil our adversary, and glorify our God in the day of such a visitation. The original is very emphatic, *καὶ μὴ εἰσενεγκῇς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν*, “and lead us not in, into temptation.” The word *εἰσενεγκες* comes from *εἰσφέρω*, to *bring* or *lead in* ; and this is compounded of *εἰς*, *into*, and *φέρω*, to *bring* or *lead*. Taking this kind of double entry into consideration, there is room enough for the criticism that states, “*into* is more than *in*.” A man may be tempted, and *in* a state of temptation, without entering *into* it ; entering into it implies giving way, closing in with, and embracing it. That man has entered into a temptation who feels his heart inclined to it, and would act accordingly, did time, place, and opportunity serve. Christ was tempted even to worship the devil, but he entered not into any of the temptations of his adversary ; the prince of this world came and found nothing in him, no evil nature within to join with the evil temptation without. Now, a man may be on the verge of falling by some powerful and well-circumstanced sin, he may be *in* it ; but the timely help of God may succour him, and prevent him from entering *into* it ; and thus a brand is plucked from the burning. He was heated, yea, scorched by it ; but was saved from the desolating and ruinous act. This may be one meaning of this most important petition ; and thus the poet,—

O, do thou always warn  
 My soul, of *danger near* ;  
 When to the *right* or *left* I turn  
 Thy voice still let me hear .

“ *Come back ! this is the way ;  
Come back ! and walk herein !*”—  
O may I *hearken* and obey,  
And *shun the path of sin !*

We see the progress of temptation in the case of Achan, and his entering into it. 1. He saw a rich Babylonish garment, and a wedge of gold. There was no sin in simply *seeing* it. 2. When he *saw* it, he *coveted* it. Here he *felt* the temptation, it began to gain possession of his *heart*. 3. He *took* it. Here he entered fully *into* it ; but, conscious of his iniquity, and afraid of exposure and punishment, 4. He *hid it* among the stuff—hid it in such a way that it could not be found but by God himself. We see from this, and many other cases, that temptation may come,

1. As a simple evil thought.

2. A strong imagination, or impression made upon the imagination by the thing to which we are tempted.

3. Delight in viewing it, with the opinion that, if possessed, it would be useful.

4. Consent of the will to perform it. Thus *lust* is conceived, *sin* is finished, and *death* is brought forth ; James i. 15.

Our Lord’s advice to his disciples, Matt. xxvi. 41, may be an illustration of this petition, “ Pray that ye enter not into temptation ; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Ye may be tempted—do not *enter into it* ; for though your hearts may be now right with God, and ye are now willing to go even unto prison or death for my sake, yet the *flesh* is weak ; it may be overcome—my power only can save you ; but this cannot be expected where the means are not used ; therefore *watch* and *pray*, or your fall is inevitable.” “ O Lord, let us fall into no sin !” Amen.

## THE SEVENTH PETITION.

“Deliver us from evil,” ver. 13.

Ρυσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπο τοῦ πονηροῦ, *Deliver us from the devil, or wicked one.*

*Satan* is expressly called ὁ πονηρός, *the wicked one*, Matt. xiii. 19, and 38; compare with Mark iv. 15, Luke viii. 12. This epithet of Satan comes from πόνος, *labour, toil, sorrow, misery*, because of the drudgery that is found in the way of sin, the toil and sorrow that accompany and follow the commission of it, and the misery which is entailed upon it, and in which it ends. This is a good description of him who “seeketh rest and findeth none,” who “goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour;” of him who can truly say—“Where’er I go is hell; myself am hell.” And all they who are his children partake of his nature, and of his restless wretchedness; the wicked are like the troubled sea, that can never rest, but is always casting up mire and dirt. To be delivered from the paw of this lion is no small mercy; to have him bruised under our feet is a great triumph. Rabbi Judah was wont to pray thus: “Let it be thy good pleasure to deliver us from impudence and impudent men; from an evil man, and an evil chance; from an evil affection, an evil companion, and an evil neighbour; from Satan, the destroyer; from a hard judgment, and a hard adversary!” I have remarked among the simple, honest inhabitants of the counties of Antrim and Londonderry, in Ireland, that the common name for the *devil* or *Satan*, was, *The Sorrow*; a good sense of the original word, ὁ πονηρός, *the wicked one*, *the evil one*, the *sorrow*. He who is *miserable* himself, and whose aim is to make all others so. Where sin is, there

is sorrow. Deliver us from the evil, toil, labour, sorrow, and misery of sin ! Lord, hear the prayer !

*Deliver us*, *ῥυσαι ἡμᾶς*, a very expressive word, *break our chains—loose our bands—snatch, pluck* us from the evil, and all its calamitous issues. The word *deliver* seems to imply that we are already in the hand, or less or more under the power, of the *adversary*. It is an awful thing to be either under the power of evil, or in the hand of Satan. How earnestly should we offer up this petition to God, that we may be saved from a danger so imminent ; that, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we may serve God in righteousness and true holiness before him, all the days of our life ! Amen.

Some make but one petition of the two latter ; they appear to me to be sufficiently distinct : the former leads us to pray against excitement to sin ; the latter, against the consequence of having given place to the devil. It is a different thing to pray against solicitations to sin, and to pray to get the thoughts of our hearts cleansed by the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit ; the first says, "May we sin against thee no more !" the second says, "Deliver us from the power, condemnation, and pollution of the crimes which we have already committed !" They are very different petitions ; and this considered, there are doubtless *seven petitions* in the Lord's Prayer.

#### THE DOXOLOGY.

"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." ver. 13.

The whole of this doxology is rejected by Wetstein, Griesbach, and the most eminent critics, as being omitted by many ancient MSS., Versions, and Fathers. The authorities on which it is rejected, may be seen in the

above writers. Griesbach seems perfectly convinced that it never made a part of the sacred text, originally.

Now, as this doxology is at least very ancient, and was in use among the Jews, as well as all the other petitions of this excellent prayer, it should not, in my opinion, be left out of the Text, merely because some MSS., ancient Versions, and ancient ecclesiastical Greek writers have omitted it, and because those which retain it write it variously.

It may be considered as giving a reason for the preceding petitions. Thou canst do all that we have requested ; for “thine is the kingdom,”—that kingdom, the coming of which thou hast commanded us to pray for. See this explained under the second petition.

“And the power ;” that energy by which this kingdom is raised up, governed, and maintained ; the power that rules over all, and can do all things.

“And the glory ;” honour and praise shall redound to thee in consequence of having established the kingdom of grace, by the gospel, upon earth, in sending thy Son to bless us, by turning us away from our iniquity, and setting up the kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, in the hearts of them who believe. To THEE alone all this shall be ascribed, for THOU art the universal King, in the universal kingdom ; THOU art the almighty Ruler in heaven, earth, and hell. To THEE appertains the *glory* of having made both worlds, of sustaining them by the word of thy power, and of having redeemed mankind by the blood of thy Son.

“For ever ;” *εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας*, to the for evers, or, as some authorities have it, *νῦν καὶ αἰεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων*, now, and for ever, and for ever and ever,—or, to ages of ages,—or, to the evers of evers. In such cases we often use for ever and ever, or, for evermore. The first

ever, taking in the whole duration of time ; the second ever, all the eternity that is to come. The original word *αιων* comes from *αιε*, *always*, and *ων*, *being* or *existence*. This is Aristotle's definition of it.

There is no word in any language that more forcibly points out the grand characteristic of eternity,—that which *always exists*. It is often used to point out a limited time, the end of which is not known. But this use of it is only an accommodated one ; and it is the grammatical and proper sense of it which must be resorted to in any controversy concerning its scriptural meaning.

We sometimes use the phrase *for evermore*—for ever and more ; which signifies the whole of time, and the more, or interminable duration beyond it.

“Amen.” This word is Hebrew, *אמן* *aman*, and signifies *faithful* or *true*. The word itself implies a confident resting of the soul in God ; with the fullest assurance that all these petitions shall be fulfilled to every one who prays according to the directions given here by our blessed Lord ; to whom be ascribed the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever ! Amen !

An old English divine has given the following illustration of the Lord's Prayer, which is well worth the reader's attention :—

“Our Father ;” Isai. lxiii. 16.

By right of creation,	Mal. ii. 10.
By bountiful provision,	Ps. cxlv. 16.
By gracious adoption,	Eph. i. 5.

“Who art in heaven ;” 1 Kings viii. 43.

The throne of thy glory,	Isai. lxvi. 1
The portion of thy children,	1 Pet. i. 4.
The temple of thy angels,	Isai. vi. 1

“Hallowed be thy name ;” Ps. cxv. 1.

By the thoughts of our hearts,	Ps. lxxxvi. 11.
By the words of our lips,	Ps. li. 15.
By the works of our hands,	1 Cor. x. 31.

“Thy kingdom come ;” Ps. cx. 2.

Of providence, to defend us,	Ps. xvii. 8.
Of grace, to refine us,	1 Thess. v. 23.
Of glory, to crown us,	Coloss. iii. 4.

“Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven ;” Acts  
xxi. 14.

Towards us, without resistance,	1 Sam. iii. 18.
By us, without compulsion,	Ps. cxix. 36.
Universally, without exception,	Luke i. 6.
Eternally, without declension,	Ps. cxix. 93.

“Give us this day our daily bread ;” Isai. xxxiii. 16 ;  
Ps. civ. 14.

Of necessity, for our bodies,	Prov. xxx. 8.
Of eternal life, for our souls,	John vi. 34.

“And forgive us our trespasses ;” Ps. xxv. 11.

Against the commands of thy law,	1 John iii. 4.
Against the grace of thy gospel,	1 Tim. iii. 13.

“As we forgive them that trespass against us ;” Matt.  
vi. 15.

By defaming our character,	Matt. v. 11.
By embezzling our property,	Philemon 18.
By abusing our persons,	Acts vii. 60.

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from  
evil ;” Matt. xxvi. 41.

Of overwhelming affliction,	Ps. cxxx. 1.
Of worldly enticements,	1 John ii. 15.
Of Satan's devices,	1 Tim. iii. 7.
Of error's seduction,	1 Tim. vi. 10.
Of sinful affections,	Rom. i. 26.

“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the  
glory, for ever;” Jude 25.

Thy kingdom governs all,	Ps. ciii. 19.
Thy power subdues all,	Phil. iii. 20.
Thy glory is above all,	Ps. cxlviii. 13.

“Amen;” Ephes. i. 11.

As it is in thy purposes,	Isai. xiv. 27.
So it is in thy promises,	2 Cor. i. 20.
So be it in our prayers,	Rev. xxii. 20.
So it shall be to thy praise,	Rev. xix. 4.

BERNARD'S *Thesaurus*.



## SERMON XIX.

### THE TRAVELLER'S PRAYER.

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#### LITURGY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

“O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day ; defend us in the same with thy mighty power ; and grant that this day we fall into sin, neither run into any kind of danger ; but that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance, to do always that is righteous in thy sight ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

#### ADVERTISEMENT.

PERHAPS it may be necessary to state that the ensuing Discourse, most certainly of a singular kind, owes its origin to the following circumstance :

On Dec. 17, 1817, I was providentially called to take a journey from Liverpool to Hull, in company with an intelligent and pious friend. Being alone, we had on the way some useful conversation, relative to the circumstances of such religious people as were obliged to pursue their business by frequent journeys both by sea and land, in which no privacy could be enjoyed ; and where, consequently, that daily walk, which a Christian should observe towards his Maker, was often so unavoidably interrupted, that it was next to impossible to have a recollected mind, or a heart regularly turned to God by prayer and supplication.

In our discussion of this subject, we both agreed, that to have a solemn form of well-chosen words, by which the mind could fully express itself, in reference to its circumstances, without the labour of looking for suitable expressions, must be of great utility ; and to both of us, the Third Collect for Grace, in the liturgy of our excellent church, appeared to contain both the ideas and words, which above all others were best suited to such occasions, and in which every Christian heart could join.

On that occasion I termed this collect, “The Traveller’s Prayer ;” and from that day formed the resolution, whenever I should be able to command a sufficiency of time, to write a short discourse upon it, not only to recommend this very suitable and comprehensive form for this very purpose, but also to explain the import and force of every expression, that they who should use it in such pilgrimages might have the full benefit of it, by praying, not only with the *spirit*, but with the *understanding* also.

The purpose then made, and of which I have never lost sight, one day’s rest, after the fatigues of a long sea-voyage and land-journey, has given me an opportunity to fulfil ; and judging that the prayer, thus considered, may be as profitable to others as it has been to myself, I venture to make it public ; and I have no doubt, that every serious reader will heartily join with me in praying that the many thousands of those who are exposed to the inconveniences and perils of travelling by land and by water, and the suspension more or less of religious duties through such journeyings, may be enabled to avail themselves effectually of the prayer itself, and of this little help towards a better understanding and more extensive use of it ; and that there may be in this case, as in all others, a continuity in that thread of devotion which should run through the whole web of life ; so that in all

the days that may constitute the years of their pilgrimage, they *fall* into no *sin*, neither *run* into any kind of *danger*.

May his presence and blessing be the reader's portion ! and after the journey of life is ended, may he have an abundant entrance into the holiest by the blood of Jesus ; where sin can never come, and where danger can have no place !\*

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1. With the business of life there are many untoward and hurrying circumstances connected, which in their natural operation are unfriendly to personal piety, and therefore require much watchfulness and prayer, that while we are, as duty binds us to be, diligent in business, we may also be fervent in spirit ; that while we are serving ourselves, we may not forget to serve the Lord. Where the favour and blessing of God are, there are necessarily peace and safety ; and where his blessing is not, there is no health—no prosperity.

2. In order to *obtain* this blessing, and *secure* this favour, there must be, not only a very humble reliance on his mercy and protection ; but also fervent supplication for the grace necessary to enable us to pass through things temporal, so as not to lose those that are eternal.

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\* The date of this " Advertisement," on the sermon being first published in a separate form, in 1829, was, " Stoke-Newington, August, 1828 ;" and the Advertisement concluded with, " I have the happiness to be, gentle reader, a friend to mankind, and your considerate fellow-traveller, Adam Clarke." The sermon was entitled, " The Traveller's Prayer ; a Discourse on the Third Collect for Grace, in the Morning Service of the Liturgy of the Church of England."—EDITOR.

3. Even in the use of *lawful things* we may lose our souls; for lawful things may be used unlawfully, and thus that which was intended to be a blessing, may become a snare, and eventually a curse. He who is not aware of this dangerous possibility, will not watch against it, and therefore his *fall* is unavoidable. How necessary then is the wise man's advice, "Acknowledge him in all thy ways, and he will direct thy steps." Let us take care first, that the *way* be right; that the business or employment by which we endeavour to get our bread, be just and honest; that it be a *lawful* business—one useful to society—one that, in the course of his providence, God may smile on; and let us see that in the way or manner of our conducting it, there be neither avarice nor falsity.

4. When, on examination, we find all is right, not only as to the business, trade, or calling, by which we hope to gain the necessities of life for ourselves and those who are dependant on us, but also that we are endeavouring with a pure conscience to conduct the lawful business honestly, without guile or deceit, we are authorized to expect God's blessing, and consequently success in our honest labour. But for all this God must be inquired after, to do it for us; that is, to bless and prosper our lawful endeavours, so that we may be able to provide things honest in the sight of all men. For remember, that it is the Lord that giveth thee power to get wealth.

5. All these considerations strongly show the absolute necessity of prayer to Him who is the creator and governor of all things, and the disposer of all events. "But how can we pray, or be spiritually collected, while travelling day and night in stage-coaches, where the company is as miscellaneous as the roads they take in journeying through life." Nor have we less disadvantages in steam-

packets, merchants' ships, and such like conveyances. when we go to transact our business on the coasts of the sea, or from continent to continent, on the deep waters. I grant that all these things are unfriendly to the spirit of piety ; and this is the concession with which I set out. But still they are not insuperable hinderances ; and *pray* we must, or not prosper. Many pious persons, in these circumstances, have deplored the unsuitableness of *time*, *place*, and *company*, to prayer ; a total want of *privacy*, with various causes of distraction breaking in every minute, so that the mind is incapable of working up its thoughts into anything like orderly and regular supplication, and in such a state disturbed thoughts can only form themselves into unconnected words and sentences, with which, how sincerely soever intended, the mind is generally dissatisfied ; and thus the perplexity is increased.

6. If ever a form of sound words were necessary, it must be in such a case as this ; a form short, simple, and terse, where the mind is saved the labour of composing the words which the heart at once feels to be the just types of its desires, and by which it can come at once unto the Lord, and present before him its necessities and most fervent desires, being saved the trouble of searching for suitable words to express its wants and wishes. Such is the form which appears as a motto to this discourse, but which is, in fact, the text on which the whole is intended to be built. As I wish to benefit the antiformalist as well as him who pleads for its use and importance, I only wish the former to go with me but a little way in the present case, and I have no doubt, if his heart be right with God, he will soon find that in his journeyings through the maze of this world, in the secular business of life, he will be glad to find such a help to his devotion, so near at hand.

This short prayer divides itself into the following parts or portions.

I. A solemn address to the Supreme Being :—

“O Lord, our heavenly Father, Almighty and everlasting God.”

II. An acknowledgment of his care and providence in preserving our life :—

“Who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day.”

III. A strong petition to be preserved, during the day, from sin and hurtful accidents :—

“Defend us in the same with thy mighty power ; and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger.”

IV Supplication for guidance through the secular business of the day, that it may be wisely and righteously transacted :—

“But that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance, to do always that is righteous in thy sight.”

V All these petitions, and the expectation of their fulfilment, are grounded on him who, in all the services of the church, is represented as the great sacrificial offering, and through whom alone God’s gifts and mercy can be communicated to mankind :—

“Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

I. A solemn address to the Supreme Being.

“O Lord, our heavenly Father,” &c.

In considering the above divisions, it will be necessary to examine the import of each word, that the mind may duly apprehend the idea, or precise meaning, intended to be conveyed by it.

I. The Supreme Being is here addressed by a title that is intended to point out his dominion and sovereignty —**LORD.** Power belongs to him who is the object of

our worship, and power exercised in the way of dominion or government. He is the Creator, and consequently the Preserver of all things; as he has sovereign rule, so he has sovereign right. He upholds all things by the word of his power; and has an absolute right to dispose of them, and govern them as he pleases. All beings are under him, and depend upon him; and it is he alone that gives life and breath to all things. He has way everywhere, and all things serve the purposes of his will. As we would feel the deepest reverence in approaching the presence of the king, so at least should we feel in approaching the Majesty of the heavens and the earth. I need not add, that reverence and godly fear should penetrate the heart—that we should feel our obligations to and dependance upon him; and that though we have authority to *pray*, for this he has given us, we have no authority to *command*—we are the creatures coming into the presence of the Creator, and subjects approaching the throne of the king. The exclamation O, is the expression of the petitionary spirit; and by a proper consideration of the Being we thus address, O Lord! the soul is brought into the spirit and attitude of a suppliant.

2. If we have not some endearing conception of this august Being, superadded to that of his Majesty, his terrors may well make us afraid; confidence cannot be excited by the bare contemplation of majesty and supreme authority; to come with boldness to the throne of grace, we must be convinced that he who sits on it has a friendly disposition towards us, and in evidence of it has commanded us to ask, that we may receive; therefore with great judgment have the excellent compilers of our Liturgy, or public service, added here, “Our heavenly Father.” A proper choice of terms is of wonderful use when the speaker wishes to address himself to the conscience and heart; and the judicious collection of such

terms gives them additional expression and force: and so it is here. The Divine Majesty is first presented to our view, and before him we are constrained to bow. While awed by his presence, and trembling before him, we hear him proclaimed by that most endearing of all names and relations, Father! What! is this Sovereign, this most tremendously glorious and transcendently magnificent Being, my Father? Does he call me his son, his child? Is that dazzling throne the throne of grace? That seat of majesty the seat also of mercy?—of good-will, of tender care, of gracious solicitude and parental affection? Yes; THOU art OUR FATHER; for such pity as a father sheweth unto his children, such pity hath the Lord for them that love him. He is not merely a Father, or the “Father of the spirits of all flesh;” but he is OUR Father—one whom we may confidently call our own, and claim as our own; for himself acknowledges us for his children.

3. But he is our *heavenly* Father. From an earthly father we have derived, in a secondary way, our being; and by such we have been fed, clothed, defended, fostered, and protected. The hand that led us was a hand of tenderness; the voice that cheered us was the voice of affection and love. He girded us when we knew him not; we were objects of his solicitude when we could not call him by that endearing name. We smiled through the effects of his parental kindness, when we could not comprehend that it was from him, under this God and Father, that we derived the happiness which was expressed by that smile. Well, all that this our tenderly affectioned and beloved earthly father did for us, was a proof of the love of our heavenly Father towards us; for it was from him that our earthly father derived his parental tenderness, and through his bounty alone, was he enabled to feed, clothe, and protect us. Then, with



what confidence may we draw nigh to him ! Our earthly fathers were both limited in their knowledge, and limited in their means ; they often wished to succour us when it was out of their power—to feed us when they had not the means—their love extended to all our wants and necessities, but their hands could reach but to a few. But here we are introduced to our “heavenly Father,” whose love is ever ardent, ever operative, whose all-seeing eye ever affects his heart, and his loving heart ever dictates to his almighty hand. And to show this efficiency, the same wisdom, piety, and good sense of our reformers, already mentioned, have most properly added here what qualifies and confirms the whole,—

4. “Almighty and everlasting God.”

We have already seen what is implied in the character of the Supreme Being, as “THE LORD, and our heavenly Father.” We now come to consider more particularly his power, as it immediately concerns ourselves. We see, in the course of the world, that there are multitudes of moral and natural evils which nothing but almighty power can restrain, turn aside, or destroy ; and that there are many good things, of both kinds, absolutely necessary to the preservation, comfort, and salvation of man, which no less a power than Omnipotence can produce and establish. Now it is ever necessary, in order to our confidence and faith, to have the conviction that he who is our heavenly Father, is the “almighty and everlasting God.” *Almightiness* is that from which all *might* or *strength* must be derived, and in which all *might* or *strength* is included. Every rational and intelligent agent has a degree of power. All animate beings have also a measure of *might*, which they have liberty to use or exert at any time, and in what measure they feel necessary. Every particle also of inanimate matter has a degree of force, though unconscious of it,

which it is ever exerting under a particular direction, which learned men, for want of knowing a better name, have agreed to call *attraction* or *gravity*. By this principle all portions of matter adhere; and this is called the *attraction of cohesion*; and by this they tend to each other, so as to form a grand whole, about the centre of which, at equal distances, all particles of matter are collected; and this is simply termed *gravitation* or *attraction*. The horse has strength to run; the ox, to draw; the lightning, to tear the oak; the sun, to influence all the other bodies in our system; and the earth has vegetative energy to produce the grass which grows for the cattle, and the corn which grows for the service of man; and man has strength, wisdom, and skill to employ all these in his service, and direct their powers and influences to his use. Now all these mighty powers and energies God has not only made, but directs and manages, both conjunctly and separately; all are ever in his grasp, subsist and exist by him; he rides on the whirlwind, and directs the storm; he quells the raging of the seas, he sits upon the water-floods, and remaineth a king for ever. Yea, he “rides upon the heavens as upon a horse”—manages all their powers and influences, howsoever varied, combined, or acted upon by each other, in their almost untraceable motions, revolutions in their respective orbits, and the velocities by which they travel from imperceptibly slow to incomprehensibly swift.

Now, fellow-traveller, this is God—thy “heavenly Father!” And this is a sketch of the almightiness which shall ever, as far as is necessary, and in every requisite proportion, be exerted for thee, while thou puttest thy trust in him, and acknowledgest him in all thy ways.

5. There is only one point more necessary to be considered on this head—that this Almighty God is everlast-

ing. Our earthly fathers are dead ; they have endured but a time, and could not continue by reason of death : but thy heavenly Father is everlasting. He is eternal. He is without beginning of days, as without end of time. As his Being knew no commencement, so it shall know no end. As his kingdom is infinite, so his power is eternal. And if anything farther be necessary to impress just sentiments of his parental relationship to thee, behold it in the word God, which signifies the good *Being*. He who is good of himself, in himself, and the Cause of all the good that is in the heavens, and in the earth, in angels and in men. The Fountain of all good, whether natural or spiritual—of all the good that ever was, and ever will be, to all eternity.

II. An acknowledgment of his care and providence in preserving our life :—

“ Who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day.”

1. *Life* itself is a wonder, and, in its principles, inexplicable : its preservation is not less so. Apparently it depends on the circulation of the blood through the heart, the lungs, and the whole system, by means of the arteries and veins ; and this seems to depend on the inspiration and expiration of the air, by means of the lungs. While the pulsations of the heart continue, the blood circulates, and life is preserved. But this seems to depend on respiration, or the free inhaling of the atmospheric air, and expiration of the same. While, therefore, we freely breathe ; while the lungs receive and expel the air, by respiration or breathing ; and the heart continues to beat ; thus circulating the blood through the whole system,—life is preserved. But who can explain the phenomena of respiration ? And by what power do the lungs separate the oxygen of the air, for the nutrition, perfection, and circulation of the blood ? And by what power is it

that the heart continues to expand, in order to receive the blood ; and contract, in order to repel it, so that the circulation may be continued ; which must continue, in order that life may be preserved ? Why does the heart not get weary, and rest ? Why is it that with incessant labour, for even threescore and ten years, it is not exhausted of its physical power, and so stand still ? These are questions which God alone can answer satisfactorily, because life depends on him, whatsoever means he may choose to employ for its continuance and preservation. Hence with great propriety do travellers (and indeed so should all others) thank him, for having safely brought them to the beginning of any day.

2. *Night* also is a season of danger,—it is the season from which our cares and attention to self-preservation are excluded. Self-preservation, which is called the *first law of nature*, occupies much of our time during the course of the day ; our eyes and ears watch for us, and our hands and feet ward against danger. Caution and foresight are ever on the alert, in order to descry and avert any evil that might tend to injure or destroy life. But in the night-season, eyes, ears, hands, feet, caution, and foresight are all inactive, and fall under the common state of inaction which possesses all the members of the body. God alone can preserve us from the violence of the fire, the edge of the sword, the designs of wicked men, the influence of malevolent spirits, and the various natural obstructions and causes of the cessation of the action of vital functions, which might put an end to life. He who carefully considers these things, will wonder that his life is safe at any time ; and much more, that it is preserved during the course even of a single night. While we slumber, God neither slumbers nor sleeps. He is the watchman not only of Israel, but of the whole human race, because he is the Father of the spirits of

all flesh,—of all mankind. He hates nothing that he has made ; but *man*, on account of that dignity with which he has endowed him, he pre-eminently loves. To thank God for our preservation in the course of the night, and for bringing us in safety to the beginning of a new day, is at once a duty as rational and proper as it is Christian. Our preservation at any time, our preservation at all times, is the effect of God's mercy : and for this, on the return of recollection, after the slumbers of the night, we should feel especial gratitude ; for had we died in any previous night of our life, could we have died safely ? Fellow-traveller, ask this question at thy heart and conscience, and then see whether thou canst refrain from thanking the almighty and everlasting God for bringing thee to the beginning of the day ? Thou art still alive ; and though in a stage coach, or on the great deep, thou art still in the land of the living—in a state of probation—in a place where thou canst *pray*, and acquaint thyself with God, and be at peace, that thereby good may come unto thee.

III. A strong petition to God, to be preserved, during the day, from sin and hurtful accidents :—

“Defend us during the same with thy mighty power ; and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger.”

1. Dangerous as the night-season may appear, for the above reasons, the day is in fact no less so. Though in the night we can take no care of ourselves, yet we are less exposed to the bustle of life, which gives birth to so many kinds of dangers. The labours of the day, in several of the avocations of life, are performed in perilous situations. *Mining*, in which hundreds of thousands are employed, is a tissue of dangers : in every moment, life is exposed to imminent and various deaths, by what is called the *fire-damp*, and the falling of parts of the pit

on the miners. Those who travel by land, or by water, are not less exposed. By common stage-coaches, accidents are not only frequent, but often mortal : weekly accounts from public registers are full of details of such calamitous events. Those who travel by water are yet more exposed than those who travel by land. On sea, there is never more than a few inches of plank, between any man and death. In a sudden squall, a ship may easily founder : in a gale, blowing on a lee-shore, she may soon be dashed to pieces, and every hand lost. A ship may spring a leak, which no industry or skill may be able to stop ; and after incredible labour of the crew, fill and go to the bottom, and every person be consigned to a watery grave. In cases where the weather has been dark and tempestuous for several days, so that no observation could be taken, and the reckoning, because of the conflicting and thwarting tides, has been necessarily imperfect — in a hazy state of the atmosphere, the ship may make land in a breeze or gale, either by night or day, and be suddenly dashed in pieces. Some of these perilous states I have witnessed. Besides these, there is a multitude of other dangers, which unavoidably accompany a sea-faring life, and which, in numerous cases, are destructive of human life. What need of an Almighty Preserver for those who go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters ! Should they not pray to God that he may defend them with his mighty power ? for no less a defence can avail, when he raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves of the sea, so that they mount up to the heaven, and go down again to the depths, and their soul is melted with trouble ; and the poor seamen reel to and fro, and stagger like drunken men, and are at their wits' end. What need, I say, have such to cry unto the Lord in their trouble, that he may bring them out of their distresses,

by making the storm a calm, so that they may be brought safely unto their desired haven? Through the whole of life's maze, there are dangers: the changes and chances of this mortal state are numerous; and neither by day nor by night, by land nor by water, can we be a moment safe, but under the direction and defence of the mighty power of God.

2. But that against which we should direct our most fervent prayer, is *sin*. This is more perilous and more destructive than all the possible calamities which may occur on the land, and the more awful deaths which may meet us on the ocean. But what is *sin*? Let us understand this well, that we may see the propriety of praying that the mighty power of God may so defend us that we fall not into it.

SIN is the transgression of God's law—it is the doing anything which God has forbidden; or leaving undone what he has commanded us to do. Either the doing in the one case, or the not doing in the other, is here called *falling into sin*. In this petition, reference is made to a hidden gin, trap, or snare; or to a pit in the ground, over which rushes or reeds are artfully laid, so that the deception may not be easily discovered; and the heedless traveller falls into it before he is aware, and is so entangled that he cannot get out. Sudden temptations to anger, by which quarrels are provoked, and life endangered or destroyed, may be construed among those mortal falls. There may be temptations also to drunkenness, and various kinds of debauchery, from which no traveller is exempt; and by which any may fall, if not defended by the mighty power of the Lord. I need not instance temptations from “her whose house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead: for she hath cast down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by her: for her house is the way to hell,

going down to the chambers of death." With such, the path of the traveller is often most grievously infested—and the sin is more easily besetting, when a man is at a distance from his own house, and where he is not met by the eye either of acquaintance or friend. Many fall into sins when they are abroad, to which they have neither temptation nor incentive when they are at home. Let none therefore despise counsels of this kind: howsoever well armed, there are deceptions and dangers in the way; and if not to the very grosser vices, yet to others, by which the soul may equally suffer; and the letter as well as the spirit of the prayer is, Grant that THIS DAY we fall into no SIN: and the night also, may be safely included in the petition.

3. The prayer is extended not only to defence against sin, but against all kinds of hurtful accidents: "Neither run into any kind of danger."

The dangers into which we may run, are widely different from those already mentioned. I have spoken of two kinds already; those which we may meet with in travelling by land, and those which may occur in travelling by water; but the running into any kind of danger, may refer to anything that may occur in our walks in the streets or lanes of any city or large town. I have known persons, in endeavouring to run out of the way of carts and coaches, actually run into the way of danger. I have known one who, walking along the parapet, was crushed to pieces by a cart-wheel against the wall. I have seen a woman, striving to see the raree show of an illumination, fall from a garret, and dashed to pieces on the pavement. I have seen a man who had got too much liquor riding furiously, his horse fell, and he was killed on the spot. I have seen another, who, getting on forbidden ground, was shot dead on the spot. I have known another, who fell over a bank, and was dead before he



could be taken up. In short, I have known many who ran into various kinds of dangers, and have paid for their imprudence, temerity, or what was called the accident, by the loss of their life. From what I have seen, as well as from what I have heard, I see the great necessity of using such a prayer as this in every part of the walk of life—"Grant that this day we run into no kind of danger :—" and in crossing the streets of London, or other large cities and towns, let us remember the proverb, that "there are always 200 yards more of room behind a coach, than before it." Of this many are sadly unmindful, and run across public streets, before horses and carriages driving at full trot ; and not a few have either lost life or limb by this folly.

IV Supplication for guidance through the secular business of the day, that it may be wisely and righteously transacted :—

"But that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance, to do always that is righteous in thy sight."

1. The governance of God is a subject of mighty importance, and concerns every human individual.

What God has created, he upholds ; what he upholds, he governs. Without him nothing is wise, nothing is holy, nothing strong. Many suppose that God governs the world by general laws ; or rather, that he has imposed what they call *general laws*, and left them to govern the world, with which he does not intermeddle. That this notion is absurd will at once appear, when we consider, 1st, That all *generals* are composed of *particulars* ; and if he govern the generals, he must also govern the parts of which they are composed. 2dly, That if there be laws which he has imposed on the universe, whether they be general or particular, they must have their action and efficiency from HIMSELF ; and whatever be the mode according to which he governs,

he himself must be the energy by which the government is administered ; and therefore it is not general nor particular laws which govern the world, but the great, wise, and holy God, governing according to a particular mode of his own devising, and according to which he is disposed to work. Properly speaking, he governs not by either general or particular laws, but by his own infinite wisdom, adapting his operations to all those circumstances and occurrences which are ever before him, and ever under his direction and control—"from seeming evil still educating good—and better still in infinite progression." As all matter and spirit were created by him, and all that he has created he upholds, so all matter and spirit are governed by him. Everything, therefore, is under his continual superintendence or governance ; and as that governance is wise, holy, and good, so whatever is governed by it is governed in the best manner, and conducted to the best end.

2. This *governance* of GOD is the model of all perfection in government ; and all that is conducted by this model must be what is useful and good to the whole, and beneficial to the individual. God, in his government of the world, has for his object the benefit and salvation of men. They whose doings are ordered, i. e., arranged and directed, by his government, must aim at his glory, and the welfare of their fellow-creatures ; and their whole conduct must tend to promote "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good will among men."

3. As God's *governance* is *righteous*, so every work of man which is formed on that model must be righteous also. "Be ye holy," says the Lord, "for I am holy ;" i. e., in other words, "Let all your doings be ordered by his governance, that ye may always do that which is righteous," not in the estimation of man merely, but in

the sight of the Lord. Let not this be the case occasionally, or on select occurrences, but always—in all times, places, and seasons. For the Spirit of the Christian religion does not enjoin occasional acts of piety merely, but a whole life of justice, integrity, truth, and righteousness. In short, we should have the very thoughts of our hearts cleansed by the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his name. And we shall never act thus till we get under the divine governance, and begin, continue, and end every work to his glory, and the benefit of mankind. Then, and then only, shall all our doings be ordered by his governance; and then only shall we do that which is righteous in his sight.

V All these petitions, and the expectation of their fulfilment, are grounded on him who, in all the services of the church, is represented as the great sacrificial Offering; and through whom alone God's gifts and mercy can be communicated to mankind: hence we conclude by saying,—

“Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

1. God never dispenses either gifts or graces, but on some sufficient reason to justify his conduct; though he owes not any account of his conduct to man. But why is it that he should become our Father? Why is it that he should take care of us day and night? Why is it that he should preserve us from sin and danger? Why is it that he should guide us by his governance, and so influence us by his grace and Spirit, that we may do “that which is lawful and right in his sight?” These things he does promise; and why should he bind himself to do these things for us, who are debased by sin, and whose best desert is hell? who have rebelled against him, and have not hearkened to the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in the way that he hath set before us?

Why? He does all these things for us through Jesus Christ our Lord. The word *through* signifies here, not *by* Christ as an agent, but *on account* of Christ; for the sake of him—on account of his worth, worthiness, or merits: and why? This Christ took our nature upon him, became man, died in our stead, and thus bore the punishment due to mankind, in his own body upon the tree. He was delivered for our offences, and rose again for our justification. God was pleased with this, and he is pleased with all those who believe in this Christ as having died to make an atonement for their sins, and thus reconcile them to God. There is no good in man but what God's mercy puts in him; therefore it is not for man's sake, on man's account, or for his worth or merits, that God does these things for him; but for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. But who is this person, for whose sake or merits God does all these things for man? He is called Jesus Christ our Lord! Jesus is a Hebrew word, and signifies *him that saves*. This is the interpretation of it given by the angel of God, who foretold his birth: "His name shall be called *Jesus*, for he shall save his people from their sins," Matt. i. 21. But the word signifies also a *preserver*; that is, the person who, having saved, preserves those in the state of salvation who depend upon him; so that the word Jesus signifies one who saves men from sin, and who preserves them in that state of salvation.

2. The word *Christ* is Greek, and is the same as *Messiah* in Hebrew; and both signify the Anointed One, or the Anointer. In ancient times, prophets, priests, and kings had oil poured upon their heads, in token that God had appointed them to their respective offices. Now oil was an emblem of the Holy Spirit, of his gifts and of his graces; and when a man was anointed with oil, in the name of the Lord, for any of the above offices,

it was supposed that the Holy Spirit rested upon him in the gifts and graces necessary to qualify him to fulfil the office to which he was appointed by the Lord, whether it was that of priest, prophet, or king. For the good sense of mankind, in ancient times, as well as the direct revelation of God, taught them that no man could fulfil the office of a prophet, either by preaching or predicting future events, unless endowed by this spirit of wisdom and understanding ;—that no man could worthily execute the priest's office, either by offering sacrifice to God for the people, or making intercession for them, unless influenced by that Holy Spirit which sanctified every sacrifice and gift, and communicated the power of intercession and prayer. Nor did they suppose that any king could decree justice and judgment, or properly administer the laws, unless the discernment and unction of that Holy Spirit of the Lord rested on him. Christ, in whom the fulness of this Spirit dwelt, was appointed to be the Prophet, Priest, and King of the human race. As a Prophet, he declares to and teaches man the will and counsel of God. As a Priest, he offers his own body on the cross as an atonement for the sin of the whole world. As a King, he reigns over the whole earth by his power, and in the hearts of all true Christians by his Spirit.

3. He is called also *our Lord*. This title I have already explained ; it signifies *governor, supreme potestate* :—and he governs the church, and rules the hearts, affections, and desires of all his children. Man has no worthiness for which he can claim anything from the God of justice ; therefore, whatever he receives, it must be for Christ's sake. And this truth is so great and important, that all or nearly all the prayers in our liturgy, are thus concluded : every grace and gift of God's Spirit is asked “for Christ's sake.” For his sake repentance, faith, pardon of sin, holiness, and heaven are requested

of God : “for Jesus Christ’s sake,” or “through Jesus Christ our Lord.” We have an entrance to the holiest by his blood. And because of the infinite merit or worth of his sacrificial offering for the sins of men, God can be just, and yet the Justifier of him who believeth on Jesus. He who thus believes had been previously a rebel against God, but is now turned to him with a truly penitent and believing heart.

To ratify and confirm these several petitions, we add the word *Amen*, the meaning of which I come now to explain.

*Amen* is a mere Hebrew word, and signifies *faithful* or *true* ; and when used at the end of prayer, implies a confident resting of the soul on God, with the fullest assurance that the petitions which have been offered according to his will shall be all most graciously and punctually fulfilled.

As, therefore, the word has reference to the *truth* and *faithfulness* of God, so it has also to the *sincerity* of the person who ends, and as it were seals, his petitions with it. If the heart be not concerned in the petitions, the Amen is of no use. God will not ratify, by a fulfilment, prayers which our hearts cannot be said to have offered at the throne of grace. But when right words are used, and the lips have not uttered them till the heart has weighed the import of each expression, then the whole may be justly presumed to have entered into the ears of the Lord our heavenly Father ; and that he will turn aside the evils which threaten us, and grant us those good things which we have sincerely asked in the name and for the sake of

JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.

## SERMON XX.

### DEATH UNAVOIDABLE.

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2 SAMUEL xiv. 14.

“For we must needs die, and *are* as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect *any* person: yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him.”

THE circumstances in which these words were uttered, as well as the remote but direct cause whence these circumstances flowed, must be considered, in order to see and to feel the weight and importance of the maxims laid down in the text.

In the eleventh chapter of this book, the inspired writer, 1. Gives us a very circumstantial account of David's transgression with Bathsheba, the wife of one of his captains, and the criminal means he used to hide his transgression, which, as intended, brought about the death of this brave man. 2. The notice taken of those criminal acts by the God of justice and purity, in chap. xii., and the divine threatening relative to the judgments which God would send, or permit to fall on himself and family, as proofs of the depth of his guilt, and of the high and just displeasure of that sovereign Lord, whose authority he had despised, and whose laws he had broken.

The message of God was sent to David by the prophet

Nathan, and was delivered in a few simple, but dreadfully appalling words. “Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from thine house:—I will raise up evil against thee, out of thine own house: for thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.” See chap. xii. 7—12.

The fearful and appalling effects of David’s double crime, and the denounced judgments of the Almighty, we shall soon see fulfilled in the horrible rape of Amnon, on his half-sister; in the fratricide of Absalom, who treacherously murdered the ravisher of Tamar, who was his full sister; the expulsion of the murderer from the favour of his father, and his banishment from the Israelitish court; and, subsequently, the rebellion of this wicked brother and unnatural son against his own father; the total overthrow of the thoughtless multitude which he had drawn into the vortex of his rebellion; and his own tragical death, when fleeing from the battle in which he was defeated.

On these subjects, too awful and revolting in their nature and circumstances, it would be improper to dwell: to mention them in connexion with the fact on which the text is founded is quite sufficient; and from them we shall draw this inference only, that while they show the horrible depravity of the human heart, and the long-suffering, just judgment, and unmerited mercy of Jehovah, their detail in the sacred writings is an illustrious proof of the truth of those divine records; for who that intended to deceive, by fabricating a religion which he designed to father on the purity of God, would have inserted such an account of one of its most zealous advo-



cates, and previously its brightest ornament? God alone, whose character is impartiality, has done it, to show that his religion, the truth of which is demonstrated by its own intrinsic and influential purity and excellence, will ever stand independently of the conduct of its professors.

It was during the time of Absalom's banishment from the Israelitish court, that the transactions mentioned in this chapter took place. Absalom, plotting deep designs of treason and rebellion against his too fond parent, saw that unless he was reinstated in his favour, and brought back to court, he could not possibly execute them; applied to Joab, the generalissimo of his father's forces, to use his influence with the king, to effect his restoration: after a great deal of reluctance, evidenced on the part of the general, he at last undertook the negotiation. And that he might appear as little in it as possible, employed a sensible widow of Tekoa (a little city in the tribe of Judah, about twelve miles from Jerusalem) to use the prominent features of her own case, and embellish them according to the circumstances of the case which she was instructed by him to represent to the king; in order that he might, without knowing her design, or in the least suspecting her cunning, pronounce a solemn decision, which would, by fair construction, apply to the case of Absalom; and thus oblige David to recall his son from banishment.

Being admitted to the king's presence, she uttered a cry of distress, "Help, O king!" and being encouraged to open her case, made, in substance, the following statement: "I am a desolate widow, and my husband at his death left two sons; these in an unfortunate disagreement quarrelled, and one was slain. My late husband's family rose up and demanded the slayer to be delivered up to them, that he might pay with his life

the life of his brother whom he had slain ; as the law had provided that the nearest akin to him who was slain should avenge his death, by slaying the murderer This being my only son, and the sole heir and representative of the family, if he be destroyed, the inheritance is lost, and to my deceased husband there shall not be either name or posterity left in Israel."

The king, affected with the case, told her that he would give orders to the proper officers to consider her appeal. As, in such a case, delay would be most likely to bring about discovery, and thus defeat the whole design, the widow, affecting to be much alarmed for the safety of her remaining son, and seeing that David hesitated to decide, and promise to save the life of her son, supposing that he did so, lest the not bringing the offender to the assigned punishment might appear to reflect on the administration of justice in the land ;—to remove all such scruples from his mind, she very cunningly, and with great address, cried out, "Let the iniquity of rescuing him from the death that I allow he has deserved be visited on me, and my father's house, and the king and his throne be guiltless, if this should be found to be a case to which the royal clemency should not have been extended." To pacify her, the king told her, that if the next of kin still continued to urge his claim, founded on the law, to bring him before him ; and he would so settle the matter, that he would in future relinquish his claim. The widow seeing that this would not bring the business to such a bearing, that it would issue in the conclusion she wished, affecting the greatest alarm, lest the avenger of blood should instantly avail himself of the authority of the law to slay the murderer, prayed the king to issue his mandate to prevent this, and to give her his solemn promise that all proceedings relative to this affair might be stopped.

The king, increasingly affected with the case, and the widow's importunity, instantly pronounced her son's pardon, and confirmed it by a solemn oath : " As the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth ! "

The widow having now taken all the preliminary steps she had projected, and having arrived at that conclusion with the king that she wished for, thus discloses her purpose, and applies and enforces her request with what is called the *argumentum ad hominem* (a mode of reasoning by which a man is pressed with consequences drawn from his own principles or concessions, to admit what his opponent contends for), which she expands in the following manner : " Is not the king himself blameable ? Does he act a consistent part ? He is willing to pardon the meanest of his subjects, the murderer of a brother, at the instance of a poor desolate widow ; and he is not willing to pardon his son Absalom, whose restoration to favour is the desire of the whole nation ! Is that clemency to be refused to the king's son, the hope of the nation and apparent heir to the throne, which is showed to a private individual, whose death or life can be of consequence only to one family ? " " Why, therefore, dost not thou recall thy banished child ? " Whatsoever there is done should be done quickly : all must die ; God has not exempted any one from this common lot : though Amnon be dead, the death of Absalom cannot bring him to life, nor repair this loss. Besides, Amnon for his crime justly deserved to die, and thou in his case didst not administer justice. Horrible as this fratricide is, is it not a pardonable case ? Was not the crime of Amnon the most flagitious, and the offence to Absalom (the ruin of his beloved sister) indescribably great ? Seeing, then, that the thing is so, and that Amnon can no more be recalled to life, than water spilt upon the

ground can be gathered up again ; and that God, whose vicegerent thou art, and whose example of clemency as well as justice thou art called to imitate, devises means that those who are banished from him by transgression and sin may not be *finally* expelled from his mercy and his kingdom :—remember, then, the Lord thy God ; restore thy son to favour ; pardon his crime, as thou hast promised to restore my son ; *and the Lord thy God will be with thee*—he will show thee his mercy, and grant thee his salvation.

That such argumentation was conclusive and successful need not be stated. Absalom was recalled ; but while mercy triumphed, justice had its claims, and was respected ; though the legal guilt of his crime was pardoned, he was permitted to return to Jerusalem, and yet his father very properly refused to admit him either to his confidence or presence, till he should have greater proof of his humiliation ; and therefore he was ordered “to go to his own house :—for the king said, Let him return to his own house ; and let him not see my face,” ver. 24.

Though the argument in the text is as elegant as it was well-timed, artfully conducted, and successful ; yet we must lose sight of it as referring to the case of Absalom, and consider it as containing indisputable maxims, applicable to occurrences which are in continual train ; and to facts which are universal, and which concern and should interest every human being. In this general way the widow of Tekoa herself uses it : “For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again ; neither doth God respect any person : yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him.”

From these assertions I shall,

I. Draw the general conclusion, that death is unavoidable, for the reasons which I shall adduce.

II. That no state or condition of man can exempt him from it.

III. That all men are in a state of exile or banishment from God.

IV. And that, notwithstanding the justice of their banishment, God has found out means for their restoration.

I. Death is unavoidable : we must needs die ; that is, there is a necessity why death should bring all mankind under his empire.

The term *necessity*, from the Latin *necessitas*, requires, in such a connexion as this, definition. Our best Lexicographers, without attempting to point out its component parts, give it this general definition,—cogency, compulsion, inevitable consequence ; that state of such things as must be as they are, and cannot possibly be otherwise, without implying a contradiction ; and therefore cannot cease to be what they are, and as they are, unless they be annihilated, or undergo an essential alteration of their nature ; and therefore it has been derived by grammarians from *non cessans esse*, not ceasing to be what it is ; because, if it did cease to be what it now is, that which it was ceases to exist. Sometimes it signifies need, want, poverty ; that without which we cannot live, or be comfortable in life ; such as air to inflate the lungs, power of contraction and dilatation of the heart, in order to the circulation of the blood, without which we cannot live ; food, without which we can at no time live comfortably ; and must totally cease to live if proper aliment be not supplied. Thus the man's death was necessary or unavoidable, because he had no

food—his lungs collapsed, and he could not breathe—his heart ceased to receive and convey the blood, and therefore he died, and could not, in such circumstances, but die. His death was necessary or unavoidable, because he wanted what was necessary or needful to support life. And he may be said to be under a double necessity of dying, who not only wants what is needful to support life, but is also in or under the influence of circumstances which from their own natural operation would inevitably deprive him of life. The unavoidableness of death is that which is here intended by *we must needs die*; there is a necessity for it:

1. Because we are now naturally mortal, and cannot live always.

2. The Author of life, who has the supreme authority over us, has most positively declared to men, “Ye shall surely die.”

3. Because the very means of life tend remotely to destroy it.

4. Without death, the resurrection of the body, and its ultimate immortality, cannot take place, nor be insured.

Therefore, *we must needs die*, in order to become immortal—in order to bear the bitter pains of an eternal death, or to enjoy the fulness of an eternal joy and felicity at the right hand of God.

With any other acceptations of the word necessity, my subject is not concerned. I leave, therefore, absolute necessity, physical necessity, moral necessity, casual necessity, fatality, compulsion, free agency, &c., to their relative subjects.

Then 1st, “We must needs die,” because we are naturally mortal; and cannot, in our present connexions and circumstances, live always. But it may at once be asked, Whence does this necessity arise?

That God made man conditionally immortal cannot, I think, be reasonably doubted. Though formed out of the dust of the earth, his Maker breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul ; and as there was then nothing violent, nothing out of its place, no agent too weak or too slow on the one hand, or too powerful or too active on the other ; so all the operations of nature were duly performed in time, in quantity, and in power, according to the exigencies of the ends to be accomplished. So that in number, weight, and measure, everything existed and acted, according to the unerring wisdom and skill of the omnipotent Creator. There could, therefore, be no corruption or decay ; no disorderly induration, nor preternatural solution or solubility of any portions of matter. No disorders in the earth ; nothing noxious or unhealthy in the atmosphere. The vast mass was all perfect ; the parts of which it was composed equally so. As he created, so he upheld all things by the word of his power ; and as he created all things, so by him did all things consist : thus expressed by the apostle, Colos. i. 17 : *Και αυτος εστι προ παντων, και τα παντα εν αυτω συνεστηκε*. “ And he is before all things ; and by him all things stand together ”—cohere, keep their respective places, and accomplish their appointed ends. And among these, MAN : every solid had its due consistency,—every fluid its proper channel ; some for support and strength, others for activity and energy ; and the various fluids to conduct to every part the necessary supplies, and to furnish those spirits by whose natural and regular agency life, under God, is sustained.

I have stated that man was created conditionally immortal ; for God, who had a right to impose on him, as a free agent, what conditions he thought proper, and that line of duty, which as a subject to his Sovereign he was bound to observe, said, when he placed him in the

garden of Eden, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat ; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it ; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die ;" מוֹת תָּמוּת *mot tamut*—"Dying thou shalt die." Thou shalt then lose the principle on which thy immortality depends ; thou shalt, on the breach of this precept, *begin to die*,—"thou shalt ultimately return unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken ; for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." This simple, plain, easy condition, on which depended his immortality, he broke ; and thus forfeited his right to the blessing with which he was naturally endowed ; and thus corruption and decay, and a disorderly course of nature, were superinduced ; the air that he breathed became unfriendly to the continual support of life ; the seeds of dissolution were engendered in his constitution, and out of these various diseases sprang, which, by their repeated attacks, sapped the foundation of life, till at last the fruit of his disobedience verified the judgment of his Creator ; for after living a dying life, it was at last terminated by death.

Now, as all have sinned, so death passed upon all men ; therefore, "we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, that cannot be gathered up again."

2dly, The Author of life, who has the supreme authority over us, has most positively declared to sinful men, "Ye shall surely die."

We have seen that death had no place among the works of the Creator, at the beginning. It was threatened as an evil, when the test of obedience was given to man. Had it been a thing natural or unavoidable, why should it be mentioned as the penalty of transgression ? Why should it be intimated that such a thing should take place, should they be disobedient, that must have taken place in the order of natural cause and effect, whether



they were obedient or not? Neither pain, disease, exhausting labour, nor any of the ills of life, that are the forerunners and concomitant causes of death, are spoken of at all, but as things whose existence was possible, and only certain if disobedience took place. Before sin entered into the world, it was simply threatened as a cautionary measure, to prevent the fall to which a free-agent was exposed : “ In the day thou eatest of it, thou shalt surely die. When sin entered into the world, then death entered by sin ; and it was not till after this fatal and ruinous ingress that God said to the first mother, “ I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and conception ; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children ; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.”

Nor was our offending first father to be treated with greater indulgence ; for to him, thus said the Lord : “ Adam, where art thou ? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat ? Because thou hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it : cursed is the ground for thy sake (בְּעִבְרִית *baábureca*, on thy account, or because of thee) ; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life ; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee ; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field ; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground ; for out of it wast thou taken ; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

Now all this clearly proves, not only that there was no death before sin, but also that there was no predisposing cause of death,—nothing that, in the course of nature, could bring it about. The ground was fertile ; and it seems there were neither noxious nor troublesome productions from the soil ; and the benediction of the Most High rested upon the earth, mountains, hills, plains, and

valleys; but when sin entered, what a change! The glebe becomes stubborn and intractable; noxious and troublesome weeds have their full growth; though the husbandman exerts all his muscular force in painful and exhausting labour, his toil is ill repaid; thorns and thistles—every genus, family, and order, of injurious plants spring up with rapid speed, into destructive perfection; and often, when the labourer is about to fill his arms with the productions of a painfully-earned harvest, a blight vitiates the grain; tornadoes and tempests shake it out of its husk, and give it to the fowls of the air, or tear up the stalks from the root, and scatter them to the winds of heaven; or land-floods carry off the shocks which stood nearly ready to be housed; and thus the hope of the husbandman perishes. By these, and by various other means, does the righteous God fulfil the purposes of his justice, and accomplish his declaration—“In sorrow shalt thou eat of it;” for on thy account, the earth itself is cursed. Thou shalt return to the ground whence thou wert taken. Thou hast forfeited thy natural happiness and immortality—death spiritual has already entered thy soul, and the death of thy body shall soon succeed—THOU SHALT DIE! Thus spake the God of justice and unchangeable truth. He who alone could create, and who alone can destroy. He spoke—his word was *fate*!

Therefore, *we must needs die*; though he is not the author of death, nor has pleasure in the destruction of the living.

3rdly, *We must die*, because, in the present order of things, the *means of life* tend ultimately to destroy it.

In the order of divine providence there are two kinds of aliment, from the consumption of which man is to derive his support,—vegetables and flesh; and to prepare each for his digestive powers, his jaws are furnished

each with a complete set of teeth, variously configured for their respective purposes ; some for cutting, some for tearing, and some for grinding ; hence divided by anatomists into three classes :—1. *Dentes incisores*, or cutting-teeth, what we would call the biting-teeth ; which have their place in the front of the mouth. 2. *Dentes canini*, the dog-teeth, or those by which we rend and tear tough substances, such as flesh ; and these are situated on each side of the incisors. 3. *Dentes molares*, or grinding-teeth, mill-stone teeth, also double teeth and grinders, by which we reduce seeds, vegetables, and flesh into their smallest parts, that when taken into the stomach they may be more easily acted on by its muscles and the juices it contains. But notwithstanding this merciful provision of necessity, and provision for its supply, so far has mortality seized upon the whole frame of man, that, in general, the decay of the teeth renders the mastication of the food imperfect, so that it is ill or imperfectly digested in the stomach ; on this account the chyle extracted from the food is neither in sufficient quantity to repair the wastes of nature ; nor is it sufficiently elaborated to afford a wholesome blood, and the various fluids necessary for the preservation of the human frame ; hence, indigestion, and the various crudities that torment the bowels, independently of the evils which the stomach itself—the whole intestinal canal, the kidneys, the liver, the lungs, and the other viscera—suffer ; which impede their operations, and are unavoidably sapping the foundations of life. The heart itself, though the strongest and naturally healthiest of all the viscera, partakes of the general lethal calamity ; the blood is languidly received and transmitted ; its stimulating property impaired, the circulation in the fine or capillary vessels, in the extremities, becomes very torpid ; the smallest are soon stopped or obliterated : hence, the nourishment of

such parts being very imperfect, the feet and legs become cold, feeble, and rigid ; and the hands and arms palsied. The eyes partake of the general imperfection ; the humours and muscles that constitute their principal substance become opaque, flattened, and lose their vigour. In short, to follow the beautiful metaphorical description of Solomon, they that *look out of the windows are darkened* ; the *sound of the grinding is low*, the *teeth* being decayed ; the scalp or skin of the head becoming thin, the juices necessary to nourish the hair fail,—so that it falls off. *The silver cord*—the whole nervous system—is *loosed* ; and hence that direful train of those mental and corporeal maladies that often make life a burden. The *golden bowl*—the brain, the origin of the nerves, and, as is supposed, the place where reason keeps its seat, where thought and reflection are formed, *is broken*, rendered unfit to perform its functions with requisite vigour. *The pitcher is broken at the fountain*—the vena cava, which brings back the blood to the right ventricle of the heart. The *wheel is broken at the cistern*—the great aorta, which receives the blood from the left ventricle to distribute it to the different parts of the system—ceases to receive, and the other to impart it ; the pulse necessarily ceases, the lungs collapse and cease to respire, the blood is no longer oxidized, all voluntary motion, as well as sensation, ceases ; and the man, dying, even through the means of life, so many years, now dies ! *Then the dust returns to its dust*, and *the spirit*, finding its clay tenement no longer habitable, *returns to God who gave it* ; see Eccles. xii. 2—7. Man, therefore, cannot continue by reason of death ; howsoever warded off for a time, it finally triumphs ; for the counsel of the Lord shall stand ; thus, “ WE MUST NEEDS DIE, and are as water spilt on the ground.”

4thly, We must die to become immortal.

As death of any kind is a violence and imperfection in nature, it could not have existed in the beginning. God had created no living thing with a necessary liability to death : it could have been no part of his design ; decay, corruption, and dissolution could not affect any of his works, as proceeding from his hand : yet we see that this primitive state did not continue : now innumerable diseases affect animal life ; even the brute creation are liable to them, and these, sooner or later, terminate in death. It is the same with the human being ; man, like to them, has his infancy, youth, mature age, old age, decrepitude, and death. “Cursed is the earth for thy sake,” is a mighty vortex which has involved the whole animal creation. The *creature*, we find, *is subject to vanity* ; yea, “the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth together in pain, until now,” Rom. viii. 20—22. Sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and this did not affect our first parents only, but the whole of their posterity, for “sin hath reigned unto death from Adam to Moses :” as the apostle expresses it—“even over them who had not sinned after the similitude of his transgression,” Rom. v. 14 ; and since that time, death has proceeded to abridge life, that he might bring in a total destruction—for such is the natural tendency of this evil. But God has been pleased to arrest its impetuosity, and limit its operations ; and threescore and ten years have been assigned by the Sovereign of the world, as that general boundary, beyond which few can pass, and to which, with care, temperance, and piety, all may reach. Adam was permitted to live 930 years ; his son Seth, 912 ; his son’s son Enos, 905 ; Cainan, the descendant of the latter, 910 ; and generally after the time of the above patriarchs, life became gradually abridged ; and although Noah had attained 950 years, and his grandfather Methuselah had reached to the high age of 969,

beyond which human life had never been extended ; yet after this, life became progressively shortened, till the limit of threescore and ten years was fixed by the will and authority of the Author of life. Yet how few reach it, so prevalent is sin, the fountain of indolence, intemperance, and disorderly passions : which, as a mighty and overwhelming land-flood, is sweeping away thousands of human beings daily ! But how long soever protracted, each man's earthly duration terminates with, *he died, or was slain, or slew himself*—the three horrible gates which sin has opened into eternity, through which impetuously rush all the successive generations of men ! But are they ingulfed in the great unfathomable abyss for ever ? Does death feed upon them eternally ? Is there no redemption from this awful effect of its ravages ? Are we, in the most positive sense of the word, “like water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again ?” No ! there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust ; but this is not a necessary consequence of the preceding effects or cause. It springs not from nature, nor from any law by which nature is governed. There is no principle of regeneration or revivification in the putrid corpse, nor in that dust into which it is finally resolved. The resurrection of the human body springs from the justice and mercy of the supreme Governor. Even a direct promise of it scarcely exists in that Revelation which contains the history of the creation and fall of man ; and of the various dispensations of grace and justice, by which God governed the world for more than 4000 years ; and what does appear in those sacred writings relative to this, is there by anticipation ; for the resurrection of the body is properly a doctrine of the New Testament ; and comes solely by Him who was delivered for our offences, and rose again for our justification. He alone is the resurrection and the life ;

for since by man came sin and death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead ; “for, as in Adam all died, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Had he not died and risen again from the dead, there had been no resurrection of the dead ; all had finally perished ; but now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.” See the powerful reasoning of the apostle of the Gentiles on this momentous subject, 1 Cor. xv. 12, &c. The promise of a resurrection is a promise of the New Testament ; the doctrine is there alone stated and explained. The resurrection of Christ is the basis on which it rests, and the proof of its certainty ; for he alone has brought life and immortality to light—or, as the apostle has beautifully expressed it, *καταργησαντος μεν τον θανατον, φωτισαντος δε ζων, και αφθαρσιαν δια του ευαγγελλιου*, 2 Tim. i. 10 : “He hath counterworked death, and illustrated life and incorruption by the gospel ;” whatsoever undermined life, to bring about corruption and death, he hath countermined ; and from the darkness of death, and his empire of corruption, he hath brought into full view that life of which he is the author ; and that immortality which is the consequence of destroying death, that last enemy. So “this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal, immortality ; and then shall be brought to pass that saying (which darkly intimated what is now clearly revealed), ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’”

Now, although many of the things spoken of by the apostle belong properly to the state of genuine Christians, yet the general subject includes all ; as all must needs die, so all shall rise again from the dead ; the human body shall then be built up on indestructible principles, a principle of immortality shall preserve it ; it shall no more live by supplies received from the animal and vegetable creation ; which, as we have seen, while

they nourish for a time, are nevertheless planting in our nature the seeds of decay and dissolution. For as flesh and blood, in their present state, cannot enter into the eternal world, nor can corruption inherit incorruption, all shall arise immortal ; for Death himself being destroyed, and consequently all the predisposing causes that led to his dominion, there can be no more death, corruption, nor decay : man shall become immortal—an immortal body must be associated with an immortal spirit, to dwell together in that eternal state, where no change of elements or substance that might affect identity, form, or continuance, can ever take place.

Now, as all shall arise, and many through their perversity, and obstinate continuance in transgression, have died in their sins ; it follows, that of the many “that sleep in the dust of the earth, some shall awake to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt,” Dan. xii. 2. For while “the righteous shall shine forth like the sun, in the kingdom of their Father ; the wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the people that forget God.” Hell is no place of decay or dissolution : there is an unquenchable fire—there is a worm that never dies : and the subject on which those agents will act, shall be as deathless as themselves.

To such persons, there shall be an eternal separation from God, and banishment from the glory of his power. As the whole man has sinned, so the whole man must suffer ; and the vengeance of eternal fire cannot be suffered but by him who is immortal. The wicked, therefore, must die a natural death, that they may be raised immortal, in order to be capable of enduring the punishment due to their crimes ; and the righteous must die, and be raised immortal, in order that they may be capable of dwelling eternally in the presence of God, and beholding his glory.



This is not the unwarranted assertion of man ; it is the awful decision of the Judge of quick and dead ! Hear him ! “ When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations : he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth sheep from goats ; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on his left. Then shall he say to those on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”—(for which procedure he gives the reasons) ; “ also he shall say to them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels”—(and for this decision he gives also the reasons) ; and then orders the execution of the unchangeable purpose in this solemn declaration : *Και απελευσονται ουτοι εις κολασιν αιωνιον· οι δε δικαιοι εις ζωην αιωνιον*, “ And these shall go away into eternal punishment ; but the righteous into eternal life,” Matt. xxv. 46. The words which point out the duration of the state of both these classes, are the same : as the life is eternal, so is the punishment. Men may quibble and trifle here, but their desperate criticisms will not be urged there. There is no injustice in hell, more than there is in heaven. He who does not *deserve* it, shall never fall into the bitter pains of an eternal death ; and no man shall ever eat of the tree of life in heaven who has not a *right* to it. “ Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city,” Rev. xxii. 14. The former would not come to God, that they might have life ; therefore they deserve perdition. The latter gladly accepted the pardon purchased for and offered to all through his blood, and received the spirit of holiness to sanctify and refine their souls for the kingdom of heaven ; “ they have overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and his testi-

mony, therefore they are before the throne, and they shall walk with him in white, for they are worthy." Yet still hell was made only for the devil and his angels, not for man ;—man is an intruder into it ; no human spirit shall ever be found there but through its own fault. He who refuses the only means of salvation, is lost. God willed not his death.

Having now considered the general conclusion from the text, that *death is unavoidable*, for the reasons which I have adduced and illustrated ; I return to the subject under the second head.

II. That no state or condition of man can exempt him from it.

That it has been the study of man for nearly 6,000 years to prevent this generally reputed great calamity, needs little proof ; life to man is the dearest thing he can conceive : when exposed to death, everything is put to stake in order to turn aside the danger, and preserve life.

A being who has from long experience a deep knowledge of human affairs, and of the human heart, has said, "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath, will he give for his life : " and on the same ground is the universal maxim placed, *Self-preservation is the first law of nature* ; and from the same principle sprang the whole system of physic, with all pretensions to the art of healing, and to the millions of specifics which, through successive ages, ignorance and imposture have told the public would cure all the maladies of man. Every nostrum said in effect to every patient (suffering more from the botchery of the charlatan, than he did from the disease by which he was afflicted), *Take this, and thou shalt not surely die*. Time and experience took off the mask, and the *infallible*, and the *probatum est*, were equally discredited, because they were found equally inefficient.

There was, however, little respite to poor suffering humanity, for the next bold adventurer, who knew how to practise on the love of life, and brought forth his powders and fluids, fortified with a *list of cases* in which they had been successfully applied, was sure to meet with encouragement : and hence it has been justly said, “Nothing in the history of society is so inexplicable as the proneness to believe in quackery ;” but this may be in part accounted for from this simple circumstance, that the empiric most confidently promises what the patient most ardently desires. Take this bottle—take this box, and ye shall not surely die. Immortality, in effect, is everywhere promised ; and the desire for and hope of life absorb every inquiry ; reason and judgment are put to sleep, the man surrenders himself into the hands of his unknown enemy, his final sleep soon hushes every complaint, and the GRAVE covers a multitude of sins.

All these things are daily occurrences, yet the living lay it not to heart ! Though perhaps few men absolutely expect immortality in the present life, yet they put off death indefinitely : they allow that they are travelling towards it ; but it is a horizon that recedes as they advance, and is ever at the same distance. Death is not seen in his approaches, nor felt in the continual sap which he is carrying on under the foundations of life ! Regular medicine has promised much, and done little ; but the alchemistic chemistry has promised more, and with greater plausibility.

In all ages and countries since the time of Constantine the Great (and many carry it to a much higher antiquity), there has been a class of medical philosophers, well read for their respective times, in chemistry, who thought that nature tended to bring everything to perfection, but required the assistance of art to enable it to succeed. As to metals, they considered gold only to be in a state of

perfection ; that all the other metals were imperfect, only because they had not of themselves a sufficient energy to bring their respective seeds to maturity. Silver, lead, tin, and quicksilver, they considered as making the nearest approach to the perfection of gold ; and all their labour was directed to find out a tincture that would communicate the requisite energy ; depurate and impregnate the comparatively imperfect mass, and bring about a speedy transmutation ! This, called also the philosopher's stone, many of them professed to have obtained, and therefore were called Adepts. From their reasonings on the purifying and transmutation of metals, which they considered to be a healing and subliming of their diseased nature, they thought that the tincture which brought them into a state of health and perfection, might be applied successfully to the healing of all the diseases incident to the human, and even brute creation ; and not only preserve them in health, but continue life indefinitely. This also they professed to have obtained, and they termed it the *elixir* and the GRAND ELIXIR, and roundly asserted that they who used it before any of the functions of life were essentially injured, would never die. A violent death only could affect them ; but the use of the elixir would infallibly repair all the wastes of nature, destroy all contagion, and ever maintain the healthiest action in all parts of the animal machine. This secret they say all the patriarchs possessed, and this alone accounts for their extraordinary longevity ! Arabia, Germany, Holland, France, and England produced many of those highly learned and favoured men, from the twelfth to the eighteenth century, who not only attracted the veneration of the lower classes, but also the notice of kings, queens, and nobles of all countries. All these had steadily in view these two points, 1. To transmute the inferior metals into gold, that they

might build churches, endow hospitals, and in a word, destroy poverty ! 2. To heal infected nature, procure an established and unimpairable state of health, banish sorrow and sighing ; and in effect, destroy death ; so that *we must needs die* should have no foundation in nature, and might be blotted out of the Bible !

Several of our own countrymen were professing possessors of this grand secret : Friar Bacon, Thomas Norton, John Dastin, George Ripley, Sir Edward Kelly, Pearce, the black monk, Starkey, Vaughan, &c. &c. Even spirits were evoked by John Dee and others, to assist in the speedy perfection of this work ! On the continent, Nicholas Flammel, Basil Valentine, Sandivogius, Isaac and John Holland, Raymond Lully, Artephius (who arrived, as it is said, to the age of 900 years), J. Pontanus, and Theophrastus Paracelsus, who might have lived still, had he not neglected to fortify himself by a few drops of the elixir, when he went into a house infected by the plague, by which he lost his life ! I pass by those of modern times, several of whom I have known, who laboured hard, spent much property in the fire, and were ever on the very eve of success, when “ disappointment laughed at hope’s career,” by the extinction of the fire—by the carelessness of a servant—the oversetting of a cup,—breaking of a retort, or cracking of a crucible ! &c. But where are now,

“ Those mighty masters of the healing art.”

They are gone with the years beyond the flood. They have returned to the ground from which they were taken :—Dust they were, and unto dust they have returned ! After all their pretensions—after all their labour—after all their hopes and imaginations,—they arrived at the period, when the words of the *widow of Tekoa* poured contempt on all their expectations ; they

heard the knell of death, and feeling his dart, were obliged to exclaim, WE, also, MUST NEEDS *die* !

Some modern political philosophers have gone so far as to imagine, that there is a certain perfectibility in human nature which, under proper management, might be so exalted, as to induce such a healthy state of the human constitution, that a very great extension of the term of life might be the consequence—that the mind, so intent on its own improvement, would rise above animal propensities, feel no desire to propagate the human species ; and, consequently, the long extended life of the community would bring about neither want nor famine, as procreation would be at least very unfrequent ! This also was soon discovered to be vanity and vexation of spirit ; for—*we must needs die*, met the hypothesis at every turn.

Widely different from all those schemes to avoid death and gain immortality in this life, is that of Mr. John Asgill, a member both of the Irish and English House of Commons, who, sometime about 1700, published and detailed it in a book entitled, “ An Argument proving that, according to the Covenant of Eternal Life, revealed in the Scriptures, man may be translated from hence into that Eternal Life, without passing through Death :” although the human nature of Christ himself could not be thus translated ; for it was necessary, in the gospel economy, that he should suffer death.

The leading features of his scheme are the following : Man, who through his fall is liable to death, is yet by faith in Christ restored, not only to the favour of God, through whom he receives a seed of eternal life, so that he shall never die everlastingly ; but also when the business of life is ended, he shall be translated, so that he shall never see death in this state of being : and hence this gentleman was called *translated* ASGILL. The Scrip-

tures on which he chiefly founded his opinion, are, Luke xx. 34—36, “The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage, neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels, being the children of the resurrection;” and John xi. 25, “Jesus saith unto her, I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.”

This scheme had some peculiar recommendations, as founded professedly on Divine Revelation, and especially on the gospel of Christ, in the exceeding great and precious promises which it gives to genuine Christians. But some paragraphs having been culled from his work, which the House of Commons decided to be “profane and blasphemous,” neither of which were ever intended by the honest man, he was in 1707 expelled the British House of Commons, having been previously expelled from the Irish House on account of the same book! He wrote a long defence of himself and his work, in which he says, “He was ejected from the Irish House, because he had *too much land*; and from the British House because he had *too little money*.” But, after all, poor Mr. A. found that HE must *needs die*; and he is now “as water spilt on the ground which cannot be gathered up again.”

I might add here, that there are certain cases in which the prolongation of life would be a *curse*. How many tyrants, and other oppressors of suffering humanity, who were like the most destructive pestilence, diffusing over whole regions calamity and death, and whose mad career of human butchery no hand of man could stop, have been arrested by the strong arm of the Almighty, and de-

livered over to *death*, that the bleeding world might have respite, and the desolate places again become inhabited! Had many years been added to the lives of such men, what might have been the consequence, who can tell? While consternation and death walked before them; and famine and desolation followed in their train; it was some consolation even to think, "These cannot continue, by reason of death." But what shouting and triumph were there when it was known—they are brought down,—laid low,—even unto the dust!

Again, were it not for death, as an agent in the hand of God, how fearfully would the science of iniquity be in many cases perfected, and the trade of sin be extended! Some seem to live only to invent schemes of sin, and bring to perfection the practice of transgression. Were the lives of such to be protracted to the extent of those of the antediluvians, so that they might have the opportunity of maturing their schemes, and improving the modes and instruments of aggression and spoliation; and of teaching their science to all those who might be willing to learn (and countless multitudes would be their pupils); sin and its practice would be multiplied in the earth beyond all conception, and to the most fearful extent. But see the divine economy: wicked men do not live out half their days, limited even as life now is. Death is a grand agent in the hand of the God of justice to stop their career, blast their plans, and confound their devices. Thus iniquity is not multiplied in the earth to that overwhelming extent to which it would have been, had not the life of man been shortened. Was it not on this very principle, that God destroyed the primitive earth by a flood, and permitted one righteous family only to remain; the great family of sin being all cut off. Their infernal arts and diabolical sciences have all perished; the earth arose anew under better auspices, and



life was abridged, that the fallen principle might not have time to mature its plans of transgression ; yet, a gracious Creator granted what is sufficient for all to work out their salvation, to recover that divine image which they had lost, and be prepared, by his mercy, for the enjoyment of eternal glory.

After having proved that death is unavoidable, and shown the folly of the attempts that have been made to elude it ; I come now to consider what may be called the *reason* by which the *widow of Tekoa* supports her argument, in reference to the fulfilment of her request, viz., “ God hath devised means that his banished be not expelled from him.” From which I shall take occasion to show,—

III. That all men are in a state of banishment from God.

To see this the more plainly, we must collate the primitive with the present state of man : a few postulates are here necessary ; viz., God made man. Whatsoever he has made was made perfect in its kind ; it had nothing too much—nothing too little ; there was no superabundance, for that would have been useless, and argued want of economy ; there was nothing deficient, for that would have argued want of skill, or of materials, or of effective means.

All the various genera and species of STONES, of minerals, of vegetables, and animals, were perfect in their kinds : for example, diamonds, rubies, emeralds, sapphires, &c., were perfect in their kinds ; so were the different kinds of ROCKS—granites, basalts, limestone, sandstone, &c. All the different genera of VEGETABLES—oaks, ashes, elms, &c. All seeds, grasses, flowers, &c., were perfect in their kinds. All ANIMALS—beasts, cattle, fowls, fishes, insects, and reptiles, were perfect each in its kind. MAN, the noblest of all, and for whom all

these were made, was perfect in his kind, composed of body and spirit ; the former was perfect in all its parts, the latter in all its powers and faculties. But his spirit was endowed with a peculiar perfection and excellence, for it was made in the image and likeness of God, Gen. i. 26. And this image, according to the apostle, consisted in righteousness, truth, and holiness, Eph. iv. 24. Now, as between God, the Fountain of righteousness, holiness, and truth, and all SPIRITS who are partakers of these excellencies, there must be an intimate union, for these properties cannot exist independently of him, therefore man was made in union with God. In him, he not only lived, moved, and had his being ; but everything answered the purpose for which God made it. With the will of his Maker, there was a perfect consent in his will—in all its volitions, and in all the acts founded on and proceeding from those volitions. All that was in him, all that proceeded from him, God beheld to be very good ; he walked with God, dwelt in God, was *one* with God, and God with him. With his Maker, he had the closest intimacy, and the strongest fellowship. As God is omnipresent, wheresoever man moved, in all the directions his body could go, and in all the excursions his mind could take, he ever met the fountain of his being and blessings ; and the object of all the wishes and desires of his heart. Between him and his God there was no distance ; and there could be none, because of this sameness of nature : and had his nature continued the same, this union and intimacy must have continued. But, man being in this honour continued not ; by the envy of the devil sin entered into the world : SIN, that which implies the total absence of righteousness, truth, and holiness, and the presence of the evil principle of wickedness, falsity, and impurity ; from which flowed enmity to God and goodness ; alienation of affection and

desire from the supreme Good ; and transgression of the law of God, as the effect of this alienation and enmity. Man therefore was no longer in union with his Maker ; nor could he be, for what concord can there be between hatred and love, truth and falsehood, holiness and impurity, in a word, between Christ and Belial. As an abominable thing, he was driven out of Paradise, and that act of expulsion was emblematical of his banishment from the presence of God and the glory of his power. All his descendants partook of his apostate nature ; and all evidenced the influence of the body and soul of SIN and DEATH, by transgression against God, and obstinate rebellion : and thus it has continued through all generations to the present day—all have sinned, and all in consequence are banished from the manifestation of his glorious presence. He is not in all their thoughts, their ways are not his ways : heaven is not more distant from the earth, than his thoughts are from their thoughts, and his ways from their ways. And had not mercy rejoiced over judgment, every human soul would have been banished into everlasting fire, to dwell with devils and damned spirits, through ages of a hopeless end. But such is the blinding nature of sin, that man does not see this his banishment ; and such is its hardening nature, that he does not feel it. Yet it is worthy of especial remark, that, as soon as the conscience is awakened, and the divine light shines into the soul, the penitent sees and feels that he has lost his supreme Good, and that he is banished from the presence of his God and Father. He comes with weeping, and with supplication is he led : he asks the way to Zion with his face thitherward, he seeks his forfeited inheritance, and the favour of his Maker ; but so deep is he lost in the wilderness—so far into the strange country has he wandered from his Father's house, that he knows not whither to turn in order to commence a

return ; of the success of which, he finds it even difficult to hope : his complaint is like that of the most afflicted of men, “ O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat ! Behold, I go forward, but he is not there ; and backwards, but I cannot perceive him : on the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him : he hideth himself on the right hand that I cannot see him.” Job xxiii. 3—9. Who shall give hope to this distressed soul ? That hope on which faith can legitimately rest ; for he acknowledges the justice of his banishment ? God alone can give this hope, as we shall see in the next particular.

IV For “ He hath devised means that his banished be not expelled from him.”

There is something very remarkable and emphatic in the original, וחשב חשבות *vechasheb chasheboth*, “ he hath devised devices,” or “ he hath computed computations.” The word חשב *chashab* signifies to *reckon*,—compute,—lay one’s thoughts together,—contrive,—superadd,—meditate,—scheme,—plan,—and, to be intently determined on finding out ways and means to accomplish a particular end. It signifies also to *embroider*, to *superadd* figures to a cloth, on which they were to be exhibited ; and this requires skill in the plan, correctness in the outline, and the production of effect by the arrangement, colouring, and grouping of the figures. The word therefore shows that there was a difficulty in the case, which God alone could overcome,—that, speaking after the manner of men, it required a skill, forecast, and energy, which he alone could supply ; a *scheme* which astonished the *prophets* who predicted the salvation of man ; for “ they inquired and searched diligently, what and what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow ;

which things “the angels desire to look into;” 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. In short, the scheme was so difficult to execute, there being so many interests to be consulted, that Jehovah himself is represented as struck with *wonder* at the arduousness of the undertaking: “He saw that there was no man, he wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness sustained him.” The interests that were involved were, the honour of God’s justice, the exhibition of his mercy, and the recovery of a lost world, by such means as should magnify God’s law, and make it honourable,—make a free course for the current of his mercy in such a way as would be consistent with the requisitions of his justice; and would be effectual to the full and free pardon of all the guilt of all sinners; the complete purification of the ingrained pollution of all souls, and their restoration to the image of God, in which they had been created, and the enjoyment of that heaven which they had forfeited, and to which they were to be restored on the ground of a new right.

1. To effect these mighty purposes, God, in his sovereign love to the world, devised the plan of human redemption, by the incarnation and sacrificial offering of Jesus the Christ, upon the cross; “who made there, by his one oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.” Thus, divine justice was satisfied by a sacrifice offered by him who was “God manifested in the flesh; and in whom dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” In him, “Mercy and truth met together; righteousness and peace kissed each other.” As *man*, he died for *man*; as God, the sacrifice was infinitely meritorious. Then, by the preaching of the gospel, the grand jubilee was proclaimed, and all the exiled inhabitants of the earth were invited to return to

him from whom they had so deeply revolted ; to receive, through the great Sacrifice and Mediator, “an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them who are kept by the power of God through faith unto that salvation which is ready to be revealed in the last time.” And, as “he died for our sins ; so, he was raised again for our justification :” and though “we must needs die, and are as water spilt upon the ground, that cannot be gathered up again ;” yet, in the morning of the general resurrection, “he will change our vile bodies, and make them like unto his glorious body, by that working by which he is able to subdue even all things unto himself ;” so effectually hath God devised means that his banished should not be finally expelled from him. Who then that believes the glad sound, and that by faith presents the true sacrificial offering at the throne even of justice, as well as of grace, need *fear death* ? It is the last enemy, and even this last enemy shall be destroyed. Reader, then look to JESUS ! and when thou hast cast thy burden on the Lord, look on *death*, and see if he have got any terrors ; on the *grave*, and see if it be likely to triumph. No,—for He hath *swallowed up death in victory*. Reader, he hath died for *thee* ; believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt not perish, but have everlasting life !

2. But though the sacrificial death of Christ be the grand means and the cause whence human salvation flows, yet there are other means which God devises in order to make this effectual ; the LAW of God must be published to show man his righteousness. It must enter, that sin may be seen to abound ; by this law is the knowledge of sin, for no man can see his guilty state, and the ruin to which he is exposed, unless he examine his conduct and the workings of his heart by the law ; in vain is salvation preached, unless sinners are shown that

they need it. What are they to be saved from? Is it not the curse of the law? "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." This curse has fallen on every soul of man, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And who sees the worth of the Gospel, who does not know the *exceeding sinfulness of sin*? He who does not preach this law, strongly and fully, does not use one of the principal means which God has devised that his banished be not expelled from him.

3. When this is done, and the sinners become terrified, and fearfulness surprises the hypocrites, then Jesus must be announced as the "Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world;"—his incarnation,—his agony and bloody sweat,—his cross and passion,—his death and burial,—his glorious resurrection and triumphant ascension,—with his mediation at the throne of God, must be all distinctly and powerfully announced, as proclaiming the *way*, the *truth*, and the *life*; and proving that "no man can come unto the Father but by him." If JESUS be preached without the LAW, sinners become either hardened or lost in their own presumption; if the LAW be preached without Christ, sinners are driven into despair. Show Israel that he has destroyed himself; then show him that in this omnipotent Saviour his help is found.

4. But even all this scriptural and rational preaching will avail nothing, unless another means of God's devising be superadded, in order to give it effect—the influence of the HOLY SPIRIT; that Spirit that convinces of sin, righteousness, and judgment; that Spirit of light and fire that penetrates the inmost recesses of the soul, dragging forth to the view of conscience the innumerable crimes that were hidden under successive layers of deep darkness, when through this luminous, burning

agency, the sinner is obliged to cry out, "What shall I do to be saved?" "Save Lord, or I perish!" "Heal my soul, for it has sinned against thee!" When this conviction of sin is deepened in every part, and utter self-despair has taken full possession of the understanding and judgment, then that same Spirit will take of the things that are Christ's, and show them to the broken heart; it will excite strong confidence in the sovereign availableness of his merits, who, by the grace of God, has tasted death for every man; and when, through his mighty working, the penitent has laid hold on the hope set before him in the gospel, that Spirit, despatched from the throne of justice and grace, will bear witness with his spirit, that the great Sacrifice is accepted in his behalf, and he shall immediately hear, by no equivocal voice, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee!" On this news from above, he rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory; finding that he is begotten again unto a living hope; knowing that if he abide in this faith, rooted and grounded in love, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, having his robes washed and made white by the blood of the Lamb, he shall soon obtain that inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, which is reserved in heaven for all the sons and daughters of God.

5. Besides these, which are the grand means and cause of salvation, God devises many others, humanly speaking, of a minor character, suited to the various complexions and circumstances of men; to bring the thoughtless man to a sense of his danger, and a conviction of his readiness to save. Several of these are beautifully detailed by Elihu, in his pathetic address to Job, chap. xxiii. 14; in dreams and visions of the night, he often opens the ears of man, and seals his instruction,



ver. 15, 16 ; he reduces his strength by sickness, chastening him with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain, and terrifies him with the fear of approaching death, ver. 19—22 ; in the course of his gracious providence he sends some of his faithful servants to visit him in his sickness, to show him his sinfulness, and the ransom which the Lord had provided for him, ver. 23, 24 ; thus he delivers his soul from going down to the pit, and his life sees the light, ver. 28. “ Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.”

6. In short, there is scarcely an occurrence in providence that has not the same gracious tendency ; as he is continually pressing everything into the service of man, in order to his conversion, and causing all things to work together for good to them that love him. And all this devising of means, and constructing that apparently complex and astonishingly contrived apparatus of human redemption, justifies and illustrates that strong assertion of the Lord by his prophet : “ Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should return from his way and live ? ” “ As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked ; but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways ; for WHY will ye die, O house of Israel ? ” Ezek. xviii. 23, xxxiii. 11.

Thus, reader, it is demonstrated, that though “ we must needs die, and are as water spilt upon the ground, that cannot be gathered up again,” and that “ God respecteth no man’s person ; ” “ yet doth he devise means that his banished be expelled from him.” Then, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, receive the gift of his

Holy Spirit, and thou shalt not perish, but have everlasting life!

Now unto him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding great joy; to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

## SERMON XXI.

### TWO IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

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PSALM xv. 1—5.

1. Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?
2. He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.
3. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.
4. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.
5. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

THAT divinely inspired man who has been called emphatically the *apostle of the Gentiles*, has informed us that, “Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope;” Rom. xv. 4. Now, as he speaks here to those under the Christian dispensation, of those who lived under the Jewish dispensation, and consequently of those Scriptures which were given to Moses and the prophets by the inspiration of God, we learn that those Scriptures were not designed

for the use and benefit of that people only, but were intended for the edification of both Jews and Gentiles, to the end of time. If, therefore, we were even to suppose that this Psalm was written toward the conclusion of the Babylonish captivity, and that it related to the settlement of the returning captives in their own land, and pointed out the restoration of the temple worship, and the character of the persons who should be found fit to be employed in it; yet still, from the authority of the apostle, we have a right to claim it as designed for us also, and expect from it instruction, lessons of patience, comfort, and hope.

But, losing sight of this point, we see that the subject is of the most general utility, and demands the most serious attention of all who believe in the immortality of the soul, and are concerned for their character here, and their future happiness.

“Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?” ver. 1.

As it may be necessary to make a little alteration in the translation, it will be proper to introduce the original; the alteration however, though important, will be very slight. יהוה מי יגור באהלך מי ישכון בהר קדשך *Yehovah, mi yagur beaholeca; mi yishcon behar kodsheca?* “O Jehovah, who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in the mountain of thy holiness?”

The word *abide* refers to a *permanent* dwelling, a *settled* habitation, which is not the meaning of יגור *yagur* in the text. It is derived from גר *gar* or גור *gur*, to dwell anywhere for a time; to inhabit as not in a settled dwelling; to sojourn as a stranger; and rather means a temporary lodging, or a sojourning, answering to the tabernacle, to which it refers; and the word ישכון *yishcon*, from שכן *shacan*, to remain, rest, sit still, or remain at rest, is properly enough translated dwell, or abide—to

rest permanently, answering to the temple, or holy hill of God—Zion, to which it refers in the second clause of the verse. Now, for the better understanding of this twofold question, we should note the following particulars :

1. The Jewish *tabernacle*, which was a kind of moveable temple, and was migratory with the Israelites, in all their peregrinations from Egypt till their settlement in the Promised Land, is allowed by all to be a type of the church militant, or the state of the people of God in this world.

2. *Mount Zion*, or the mountain of God's holiness, where Solomon's temple was built, and the divine worship in all its ordinances became established, is allowed by the general voice of Jews and Gentiles to be a type of the kingdom of heaven. The ark, there become *stationary*, being absorbed in the temple, was no longer carried about from place to place ; and the whole was typical of that city that hath foundations—of that rest that remaineth for the people of God.

3. Of the TABERNACLE, which was a *temporary* and frequently removed building, it is said, מי יגור *mi yagur*, *who shall lodge or sojourn* there? It was not a residence or dwelling-place, but a place to lodge in for a time.

4. On the contrary, the TEMPLE was a *fixed* and *permanent* building ; and relative to it, we have the inquiry, מי ישכון *mi yishcon*, *who shall dwell, abide, or have his permanent residence* there?

5. As the TABERNACLE was a sort of *migratory* model of a temple, carried about on the shoulders of the priests and Levites, there was no dwelling there for any ; they could only lodge or sojourn at or round about it.

6. The TEMPLE being *fixed*, the priests, Levites, &c., became permanent occupiers ; there was no lodging or

sojourning, but permanent residence for all connected with it.

7. The TABERNACLE, therefore, is a proper type of the *church militant*, wandering up and down, tossed by various storms and tempests; the followers of God having here no continuing city—sojourning only in their state of probation on earth, and that only for a short time, in order to acquire a preparation for eternal glory.

8. Also the TEMPLE is a proper type or emblem of the *church triumphant* in heaven. It is the *dwelling-place*, the eternal residence, of all who have been faithful unto death; who are made “pillars in the temple of God, to go no more out for ever.” Here the “wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.” Having made the above remarks, which are founded on the letter of the text, we may next observe, that the whole subject resolves itself into two questions:—

I. Who can be considered as a fit member for the church militant here below?

II. Who shall be made partaker of an endless glory in the church triumphant above?

These questions must necessarily be answered together.

I. Who can be considered a fit member of the church of Christ here below?

To this question the inspired writer answers,—

“He that walketh uprightly and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart,” ver. 2.

In a word, he is a man that is, 1st. Upright. He is an *honest man*: “He walketh uprightly.”

2nd. *Just* in his DEED: “He works righteousness.”

3rd. *True* in his WORD: “He speaks the truth in his heart.”

1st. “He walketh uprightly.” חוֹלֵךְ תָּמִים *holech tam-mim*, “He who is walking perfectly.” He who sets

God before his eyes—does everything through a right motive, in reference to a proper end ; beginning, continuing, and ending every work so as to have God's blessing *in* it, promote God's glory *by* it, and benefit both himself and his neighbour *through* it. He is not one who makes a selection of duties or precepts, which he finds no natural disposition or propensity to disobey ; omitting those that cross his inclination, or would impair his worldly gains : on the contrary, he has respect to all God's commandments ;—should each have a cross in it, he takes up that cross. He knows that the whole forms one great system of perfection, and he aims at being perfect, as his Father who is in heaven is perfect. He never *stands still* : the text does not say that he *has walked perfectly* ; so did Lucifer in heaven ; so did Adam in paradise ; but both afterwards rebelled, and *walked sinfully*. But this man *is walking* ; he has begun to walk, is walking, and purposes, by the grace of his God, to walk on to the end ; nor cease to walk perfectly until he ceases to live. He takes the word of God for the rule of his conduct, and his Spirit for the director of his heart. He feels himself a stranger and a sojourner here below, and is constantly walking on towards the kingdom of heaven. He acts not only according to the letter, but also according to the spirit of God's law. He knows, he feels that the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, just, and good. He walks according to the perfections of God's law, and feels the weight and importance of all its injunctions. In a word, he has simplicity in his intentions, and purity in his affections. He no more seeks any by-ends than he walks in any bad way.

2nd. "He worketh righteousness."

He is not satisfied with a contemplative life ; he has duties to perform. The law of righteousness has placed

him in certain relations, and each of these relations has its particular duties. The word *צדק* *tsedek* here signifies to give just weight, to render to all their due. 1. As he is a creature of God, he has duties to perform to his Maker. He owes to him reverence and obedience—his heart is the property of his Creator; he distinguishes the voice that says, “My son, give me thy heart;” and this he knows lays him under the obligation to love God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to serve him through that love. This is giving God his due. This is beginning with the right principle, that he may go straight to the right end.

2. As a member of civil society, he has various duties to perform to his fellows, as they have to him. He is to love his neighbour as himself. He is to direct him, instruct him, defend him, and support him, when he finds him out of the way, ignorant of his interest, assailed by overwhelming forces, or destitute of the necessities of life. This, all human beings owe to each other. And having fulfilled these duties to his neighbour, as necessity may require, he has rendered to him his due.

3. There are duties which he owes to *himself*.

That his *body* may be in health, vigour, and activity, he must avoid everything by which it might be injured, particularly all excesses in eating, drinking, sleeping, and the opposite to immoderate sleeping, sitting up very late, and rising very early, in order to indulge in some favourite study; this is “lighting the candle at both ends,” and in this way the taper of life must soon burn out.

That his *soul* may be saved, he must avoid all sin; all irregular and disorderly passions. It is a duty he owes to his soul to apply to God for that grace which produces repentance, faith, and holiness; and in order to get these blessings, he should read, watch, pray, hear the word of



God preached, and diligently use all the ordinances of God. He who acts not thus defrauds his own body and soul. But the person described in the text *works righteousness*—gives to all their due, and thus keeps a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man. He *works*—labours to fulfil all the duties he owes to his Creator and to his fellows ; nor in any of these does he do the work either deceitfully or carelessly ; he labours so as to bring purpose and energy to bear on every work he undertakes.

3rd. “He speaketh the truth in his heart.”

We have already seen that the person who is a proper member of the church militant, and is living in a growing meetness for the church triumphant, is upright in thought, and just in deed ; and here it is asserted that he is *true in word* : and to be right in the sight of God, in thought, word, and deed, affords the highest proof of a soul completely regenerated. He who is so is a perfect man. He is, under this particular, represented as a *true* man ; in him there is no false way ; he does not speak one thing, while he means another ; he professes nothing but what he feels and intends. With him there are no hollow friendships, vain compliments, nor empty professions of esteem, love, regard, or friendship. His mouth speaks nothing but what his heart dictates. His heart, his tongue, and his hand are all in unison. Hypocrisy, guile, and deceit have no place in his soul. To “speak the truth in the heart” is a rare qualification, perhaps the rarest in the whole assemblage of Christian graces. How seldom do we give a thing its right name ! How often do we profess what we do not feel ! In our transactions with men, how seldom do our hearts speak what our lips utter ! To induce persons to buy, do we not speak falsely of the quality of the article presented for sale ; assert that it cost so much, when our consciences

know that such a saying has ten or twenty per cent. of a lie in it? And when buying, do we not underrate and vilify the article, that we may get it the cheaper? The wise man mentions such a character: "It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer; but when he is gone his way, he boasteth," Prov. xx. 14. Thus he lied with his tongue, when his heart spoke the truth. He overreached his neighbour, and afterwards boasted of his knavery. How common is this vice! Should such a man be a member of the mystical body of Christ? Was such a false spirit ever seen in heaven? There are various other ways in which a man does not speak the truth in his heart; but the speeches are not so deeply criminal, because he does not intend to defraud his neighbour. In compliments, how much falsehood is spoken: e. g., "How do you, Sir?—I am infinitely glad to see you." Now it is most probable, 1. That he feels no gladness on the occasion; therefore he does not "speak the truth in his heart." 2. It is false, if even he feel glad, to say that he is infinitely so. There is another profession, often made in these compliments, which, from its very nature, must be void of truth: "I hope I have the pleasure of seeing you in the enjoyment of the most excellent health." "Sir, it is an essential addition to my happiness to find that it is so." Now all these are falsities; but they are not intended to deceive,—they are used according to custom,—they are either the effusions of a light and frivolous mind, or are spoken thoughtlessly. But will these considerations excuse them? How does the God of truth hear them? What does his Spirit say? "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts:" and does he not search the heart, and try the ways? "Thou God seest me!" should be a subject of frequent meditation. Does not our Lord say we shall give an account of every idle word in the day of judgment; how

much more of every wicked, deceptive, and lying word ! In the transactions of life, how many are led, from the experience they have had of the falsity of those with whom they have done business, to doubt every man's veracity, and to suspect all ! And who can much blame them ? And yet the feeling is ruinous ; it divests them of charity, and strikes at the very foundation of brotherly love. Indeed, it goes far towards a dissolution of the necessary bonds of society, for public confidence is difficult to be supported where such a disposition prevails. But still there are overreaching and lying persons to be found ; and we may deplore that state of society, where there is so much need for caution and watchfulness. This made the very pious Mr. Herbert exclaim,

Surely if each man saw another's heart  
There would be no commerce ;  
All would disperse  
And live apart.

But there is a love that "thinketh no evil ;" and the person in the text is he who is in possession of it, for "he speaketh the truth in his heart ;" and, we may add,

" *Believes* no evil, where no evil *seems*."

4th. "He backbiteth not with his tongue."

The original is very emphatic, לא רגל על לשנו *lo ragal al leshono*, "He foots not upon (or with) his tongue." He is one who treats his neighbour with respect. He says nothing that might injure him in his character, person, or property. He forges no calumny. He is author of no slander. He insinuates nothing by which his neighbour may sustain any kind of damage.

The *tongue*, because of its frequent employment in slanderous conversation, is represented in the nervous original as kicking about the character of an absent

person ; a very common vice, and as destructive as it is common ; but the man who expects to see God abhors it, and backbites not with his tongue.

The words *backbite* and *backbiter* come from the Anglo-Saxon, *bac* or *bæc*, *the back*, and *bītan*, *to bite* ; the meaning of which has not altered to the present time. But how it came to be used in the sense it is now, in our language, seems at first view unaccountable ; but it is a metaphor taken from the conduct of a dangerous dog ; and it is intended to convey the treble sense of knavishness, cowardice, and brutality. He is a knave who would rob you of your good name ; he is a coward that would say of you in your absence, what he dared not to do in your presence ; and an ill-conditioned dog only would fly at and bite your back, when your face was turned from him. All these three ideas are included in the term, and all meet in the detractor and calumniator. His tongue is that of a knave, a coward, and a dog. The rabbins term the backbiter the man with the three-forked tongue : with it he wounds three persons at the same time—the man whom he slanders, the man who receives the slander, and himself who is the slanderer.

Of such a person the Roman poet has this celebrated saying :—

Absentem qui rodit amicum ;  
 Qui non defendit, alio culpante : solutos  
 Qui captat risus hominum, famamque dicacis :  
 Fingere qui non visa potest : commissa tacere  
 Qui nequit ; hic niger est : hunc tu, Romane, caveto.

HOR. Sat. lib. i., sat. 4 ver. 81.

He who malignant tears an *absent friend*,  
 Or, when attacked by others, *don't defend*,  
 Who trivial bursts of laughter tries to raise,  
 And courts of prating petulance the praise ;

Of things he *never saw*, who tells his *tale*,  
 And *friendship's secrets* knows not to *conceal* ;  
 This man is *vile* ; here, Roman, fix your mark,—  
 His soul is *black*, as his *complexion's dark*.

FRANCIS.

The character in the text is wholly different from that censured above, and from all others of a similar nature. He who acts otherwise has no right to the privileges of the church militant, and none of his disposition can ever see God.

5thly. “He doeth no evil to his neighbour.”

He not only avoids all *evil speaking* against his neighbour, but he avoids also all *evil acting* towards him. He speaks no evil of him, and does no evil to him. He does him no harm ; he occasions him no wrong. On the contrary, he gives him his due. See under the second particular, where this subject is largely considered.

6thly. “He taketh not up a reproach against his neighbour.”

The word חרפה *cherophah*, which we translate *a reproach*, comes from the root חרף *charaph*, to *strip*, to *make bare*, to *deprive one of his garments* ; hence חרף *charaph*, the *winter*, because it strips the fields of their clothing, and the trees of their foliage ; and by this process nature appears to be dishonoured and disgraced. The application to the subject in the text is easy. A man, for instance, of a good character, is reported to have done something evil ; the tale is spread, and the slanderers, whisperers, and backbiters carry it about ; and thus the man is stripped of his fair character—of his clothing of righteousness, truth, and honesty. And yet the whole report may be false ; or the person, in an hour of the power of darkness, may have been tempted and overcome—may have been wounded in the cloudy and dark day ; and now deeply mourns his fall before

God. Who, that has not the heart of the demon, would not strive rather to cover, than to make bare the fault in such circumstances? Those who, as the proverb says, “feed like the flies, passing over all a mans whole parts to light upon his sores,” will take up the tale, and carry it about. Such, in the course of their diabolical work, carry the story of scandal, among others, to the righteous man, to him who loves his God and his neighbour;—but what reception has the tale-bearer? The good man taketh it not up, *לֹא נָסָא lo nasa, he will not bear it*, it shall not be propagated by or from him. He cannot prevent the detractor from laying it down, but it is in his power not to take it up; and thus the progress of the slander may be arrested. “He taketh not up a reproach against his neighbour; and by this means, the tale-bearer may be discouraged from bearing it to another door. If there were no takers up of defamation, there would be fewer detractors in the land. If there were no receivers of stolen goods, there would be no thieves; and hence another proverb, founded on the justest principle, “The receiver is as bad as the thief.” And is not the whisperer, the backbiter, and the tale-bearer, the worst of thieves? Robbing not only individuals, but whole families of their reputation; scattering firebrands, arrows, and death? Yes, they are the worst of felons. Hear the poet, who was well acquainted with the human heart:—

*Good name in man or woman, dear my lord,  
Is the immediate jewel of their souls :  
Who steals my purse steals trash ; 'tis something, nothing ;  
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands  
But he that filches from me my good name,  
Robs me of that which not enriches him,  
And makes me poor indeed.*

Oh, how many a fair fame has been tarnished by this

most Satanic practice! But bad as the accidental retailer of calumny is, he who makes it his business to go about to collect stories of scandal, and who endeavours to have vouchers for his calumnies, is yet worse; whether the stories be true or false—whether they make the simple relation, or exaggerate the fact—whether they present a simple lens, through which to view the character they exhibit, or an anamorphosis, by which every feature is distorted, so that, in a monstrosity of appearance, every trait of similitude of goodness is lost; and then the reporter himself takes advantage of his own inferences: “O Sir, how bad this is! but—but there is worse behind.” This insinuation is like a drag-net, gathering as it goes, and bringing everything into its vortex; the good and the bad are found in one indiscriminate assemblage.

Suppose the stories to be true, or founded in truth, what benefit does society or the church ever derive from this underhand detailing? None. There are but few cases ever occurring, where the misunderstanding between the members of the church of Christ should be brought before two witnesses, much less before the church; but there are some such, and our Lord orders us to treat these with the greatest caution and forbearance. On this point, see a sermon of the late Rev. J. Wesley, entitled, “The Cure of Evil Speaking.”

Let us now hear what the sacred writings say of the flagitious characters already reviewed, and the various words by which they express them.

1. *Evil speaking.* This is termed βλασφημία, *blasphemy*—injurious speaking, either against God or man. Our Lord gives it the following associates, Matt. xv. 19: “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”

2. *Whisperers.* The private communicators of scan-

dals and calumnies. See Prov. xvi. 28: “A froward man showeth strife; and a whisperer separates chief friends.” Prov. xxvi. 20: “Where no wood is, the fire goeth out; so where there is no tale-bearer (or WHISPERER), the strife ceaseth.” The original word is נרגן *nargan*; of this word an able Hebraist gives the following definition: “נרגן *nargan*, from רגן *ragan*, to be rancid, rank, or rusty, as bad butter or bacon.” Hence it is applied to a mind rankled or exulcerated with discontent, envy, or malevolence, and which uttereth itself in words suitable to such bad dispositions.” See Taylor and Schultens on Prov. xviii. 8.

The whisperer is called ψιθυριστης in Greek, Rom. i. 30, where he is coupled with backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, &c.; see also ver. 31.

3. *Tale-bearer.* One who had been taken into confidence, and told privately the secrets of his friend; and makes it his business to carry it from place to place, and from person to person, as a pedlar his wares; Prov. xx. 19: “He that goeth about as a tale-bearer, revealeth secrets.” “הולך רכיל *holec racil*, a slanderer—a defamer; who picketh up stories, true or false, and details them out to the disadvantage of others.”—Heb. and Eng. Concordance.

4. *Backbiters.*—See on ver. 3, and Rom. i. 30, 31, where they are associated with the flagitious characters mentioned under tale-bearer. The backbiter is called in Greek καταλαλος, “a speaker of evil against another, a detractor.”

5. *Slanderers.* 1 Tim. ii. 11. Διαβολοι, *devils*, from διαβαλλειν, to shoot through, with such fiery darts as the devil uses, and which the shield of faith only can quench. See Eph. vi. 16.

6. All these deal in *scandal*, σκανδαλα, *stumbling-blocks*,



*offences* ; whatever hinders or injures another in his Christian walk, or brings any reproach on the cause of Christ. These are the things which he will gather out of his kingdom, and them that do iniquity, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. See Matt. xiii. 40, 41.

All the above, with the whole family of defamers, false accusers, calumniators, detractors, destroyers of the good reputation of others, traducers, and libellers, however they may rank here, shall have one lot in the eternal world ; none of them shall become residents on the hill of God's holiness, and should not here be permitted to sojourn in his tabernacle, or militant church. Reader, pray God to save thee from the spirit and conduct of these bad men ; have no communion with them, drive them from thy door, yet labour to convert them if thou canst ; but if they will still continue as disturbers of the peace of society, of the harmony of families, and of the union of Christ's church, let them be to thee as heathen men and publicans ; the basest, the lowermost, the most dejected, most under-foot, and down-trodden vassals of perdition."

7thly. "In whose eyes a vile person is contemned."

This person follows the rule given by our Lord, "By their fruits ye shall know them ;" he tries no man's heart, for he knows men only by the fruits they bear, and thus he gains knowledge of the principle from which these fruits proceed. As to the *vile person*, נמאס *nimas*, mentioned here, his name points him out, "a reprobate, one abandoned to sin," and justly, נבזה *nibzeh*, he is abhorred ; is loathsome, as if covered with the *elephantiasis*, or *leprosy*, as the word implies.

He may be rich, he may be learned, he may be a great man and honourable with his master, in high offices in the state ; but if he be a spiritual leper, an infidel, a profligate, the righteous man must despise him ; and hold him, because he is an enemy to God and man, in sove-

reign contempt. If he be in power, he will not treat him as worthy of the dignity with which he is invested—but he will respect the office; and while he respects the office, and obeys the law, will despise the man. And this is quite right; for the popular odium should ever be pointed against vice, lest vice should be accredited by rank and fashion.

Rab. Aben Ezra gives a curious turn to this clause, which he translates thus: “He is mean and contemptible in his own eyes:” and it is certain that the original, נבזיה בעיניו *nibzeh beeinaiv nimas*, may bear this translation. His paraphrase on it is beautiful: “A pious man, whatsoever good he may have done, and however concordant to the divine law he may have walked, considers all this of no worth, compared with what was his duty to do for the glory of his Creator.” A sentiment very like that of our Lord, Luke xvii. 10: “So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all these things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do.”

Taken in this sense, the words intimate that the man who is truly pious, who is a proper member of the church militant, and is going straight to the church triumphant, is truly humble; he knows he has nothing but what he has received; he has no merit; he trusts not in himself, but in the living God. He renounces his own righteousness, and trusts in the eternal mercy of God, through the infinitely meritorious atonement made by Jesus Christ. The language of his heart is—

“I loathe myself, when God I see,  
And into nothing fall:  
Content that thou exalted be,  
And Christ be all in all.”

8thly. “He honoureth them that fear the Lord.”

This clause is a proof, however excellent Aben Ezra’s

sentiment may be, that he has mistaken the meaning of the preceding clause. The truly pious man, while he has in contempt the honourable and right honourable profligate infidel, yet "honours them that fear the Lord," though found in the most abject poverty ; though like Job on the dunghill, or like Lazarus covered with sores, at the rich man's gate. Character is the grand object of his attention ; person and circumstances are of minor importance.

The fear of the Lord is often taken for the whole of religion ; and sometimes for the reverence which a holy man feels for the majesty and holiness of God, that induces him to hate and depart from evil. Here, it may signify the lowest degree of religion, that "repentance whereby we forsake sin ;" for "the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom ; and to depart from evil, that is understanding." He who fears God, and trembles at his word, is so far a genuine penitent.

9thly. "He sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not."

This holy man adheres inflexibly to truth ; and at all risks maintains his integrity. He is not only true and just in all his dealings in the common transactions of life, but often acts to his own injury rather than not fulfil his engagements to others. If at any time he have solemnly bound himself to do so and so, and afterwards find that to keep his engagement will be greatly to his damage, though he and others may clearly perceive that the obligation was made in error, and reason would, in such a case, release him from the performance, yet such reverence has he for God and for truth, that he will not change, be the consequences what they may.

He is also as steady to his promises as to his oath ; and his bare word, once passed, will bind him as solemnly as any oath. Indeed, the thoroughly honest man needs

no oath to bind him—his character swears for him ; we have need only of a little reflection to convince us, that he who will not be honest without an oath, will not be honest with one.

In illustration of the doctrine in this clause, I will introduce one fact which I had many years ago, from high authority.

His late Majesty, GEORGE the Third, was very fond of children : often in his walks both about Windsor and St. James's Park, he would stop when he saw an interesting child, and speak kindly and affectionately to it, give it some little toy or sweetmeat, and often a piece of money. One day, observing a little lad about four years old, who seemed to have strayed away from its fellows, he addressed it, and finding it intelligent for its age, he took it by the hand, and led it towards the palace, the child nothing loath. He brought the little fellow into the queen's apartment, and presented it to her, with " Here, queen, here is a very nice little boy, that I have picked up in my walk ;" and then, addressing the lad, " That's the queen, my dear, bow to her." A chair was immediately brought, the little fellow was seated on it, and in a trice some sweetmeats and fruit were laid before him. Little master felt himself quite at home, ate freely, and endeavoured to answer every question that was put to him. And when he had well eaten, it was suggested that as the child might be missed, and cause anxiety in the family, it would be best to restore him to his play-ground. Before he was removed from his chair, the king took out a new guinea, and placed it before him, saying, " Here, my dear, is a pretty thing which I will give you." The child looked at it for some time, and then with his finger pushed it away on the table, saying, " I don't know it—I won't have it ;" and looked indifferently over the table. The king said, " Well, my dear, if you won't have this, what will

you have? Come, tell me what you'll have, and I will give it to you." There were several papers of a very important nature then lying on the table, which had lately been brought into the royal apartment: the child, looking earnestly at one, said, "I'll have that pretty picture," and put his hand towards it. The king looked confounded, and hesitated; the queen for a time was equally surprised, but she first broke silence (the child having then his "pretty picture" in his hand, which was no other than a new bank note for a very large amount), and said, "He must have it; your Majesty's word is passed; your royal promise cannot be recalled." The king with great good humour assented, with "Yes, yes, he shall have it." A faithful domestic was called, the child delivered to him, with the injunction, to take him back to the park, find out his playmates or nurse, and follow their directions, till he should find the dwelling and parents of the child—nothing of either being known to his Majesty or his domestics. The servant was successful, delivered the child and his pretty picture to the astonished father and mother, returned, and gave such an account to the royal pair, as satisfied them that, while his Majesty had "sworn to his own hurt," and would not change, a wise Providence had directed the whole transaction. The story was well known in the royal family, but there is reason to think the family of the child was never mentioned; for I could learn no more of this singular history, than the facts, the substance of which is before the reader. I well know that George the Third feared God, and held his own word sacred; nothing could induce him to change his purpose when he believed he was right.

The Chaldee paraphrast has given a different rendering of this clause: "He sweareth to afflict himself, and doth not change:" i. e., he hath promised to the Lord, to keep his body under, and bring it into subjection; to

deny himself, that he may not pamper the flesh, that it may not lead him into transgression ; and that he may, by saving all he can, have the more to give to the poor.

The Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, Vulgate, Septuagint, and Anglo-Saxon, translate the clause thus : “ He swear-eth to his neighbour, and doth not deceive him ;” as they all seem to have read, להרע *le-hareá*, to his *neighbour*, instead of להרע *le-hará*, to his *damage*, or *hurt* ; the change in the meaning is made by the points, for the consonants are the same in both the words : but the reading in the text is followed by the most judicious commentators.

From the whole we learn, that this candidate for heaven is a man of unimpeachable truth and inflexible integrity, who would rather suffer evil than inflict it ; and will keep his promise, at the risk of his substance and his life.

10thly, “ He putteth not out his money to usury.”

*Usury* signifies a certain part of the produce of a sum lent for the purpose of traffic ; so that a man trading with the capital of another, gave not only security for the principal, but so much per cent. for its use. This was as innocent as it was just. But when the lender, taking advantage of the circumstances of the borrower, required more for the use of the money than it was worth, usury then expressed exorbitant or unlawful interest, and in this sense it is now universally received. An usurer is one that lends out cash at such unlawful and exorbitant interest as he can twist out of the necessities of a distressed applicant : of such a practice as this no man that fears God can be guilty.

In all times, the Jews were remarkable for usury, and usurious contracts : and a Jew that is saved from this practice, and the love of money, from which it originates,

is, charity may well hope, not far from the kingdom of God.

The word נשך *neshech*, which we translate *usury*, comes from the root נשחך, “to bite as a serpent,” and here must signify that biting or devouring usury, which ruins the person who has to pay it. “This increase of usury (see Leigh’s note *sub voce* נשך) is called *neshech*, because it resembles the biting of a serpent: for, as this is so small at first as scarcely to be perceptible, but the venom soon spreads and diffuses itself till it reaches the vitals; so the increase of usury, which at first is not perceived nor felt, at length grows so much as by degrees to devour another’s substance.” Our laws have wisely fixed the worth of lent cash at five per cent. ; he who takes more is a usurer,—one who takes unlawful interest; and the same law has adjudged the usurer, on conviction, to forfeit *treble* the value of the money lent. And the Roman laws condemned the usurer to the forfeiture of *four times the sum*; Cato de Re Rust., lib. i. Our Saxon ancestors had a very bad opinion of usurers. Edward the Confessor commanded all usurers to leave the kingdom; and if any were convicted of it, all their property was confiscated, and themselves banished from the realm: because, said the law, “Usury is the root of all evil.” If a priest, then, were convicted of being a usurer, his whole property was seized, and distributed to pious uses. The clause is thus translated in the Anglo-Saxon Psalter—*repe feoh his ne fealde to gýrunga*. “Who fee his (property), not giveth to greediness.” My old Anglo-Scottish Psalter has the Latin text, *Qui pecuniam suam non dedit ad usuram*, which it renders, *He that gaf nout his catel til oker*: now this intimates that the translator had either read *pœudem*, cattle, for *pecuniam*, money, or that *cattle* was the only *money*, or medium of exchange,

current in his time and country ; and indeed it has long been customary, not only in Scotland, but also in the various hyperborean countries, for the peasantry to pay their rents, &c. in *kind* : so many cows, sheep, &c., given to the laird, thane, or earl for the usufruct of the ground. That there is no mistake in the translation, is evident enough from the paraphrase, where the author repeats the words with his gloss upon them : *He that gaf nout his catel til oker, bodily, als covaytus men dos gastly : that he seke nought for his gude dede, na mede of this wereld, bot onely of heben.*—i. e., “He who does not use his property in a secular sense, as covetous men do in a spiritual sense ; expecting no reward for his good actions in this world, but only in the kingdom of God.”

The very unusual word *oker*, in the Anglo-Saxon *oken* and *poken*, in the Gothic *pokn*, in German *wucher*, and in Danish *aager*, means produce, fruits, offspring ; usufruct, whether of cattle, land, money, or even of the human progeny. And the word *catel* may be used here for *chattels*, substance of any kind, moveable or immovable ; but the word itself appears to be derived from *cattle*, which were from the beginning, the principal substance or riches of the inhabitants of the country, and tillers of the field. And it is well known that the word *pecunia*, money, was derived from *pecus*, cattle ; which were no longer used as a medium of commerce, when silver and gold came into use.

There is a passage in the Ploughman's Tale in Chaucer, where, speaking of the worldly and worthless priests of his day, he uses the term, *cattel-catching*, for getting money or goods.

Some on her churches dwelle  
 Apparailled poorley, proude of porte ;  
 The seven sacramentes thei doen sell ;  
 In CATTEL-CATCHING is her comfort.



Of eche matter thei wollen mell,  
 And doen hem wrong is her disport ;  
 To affray the people, thei been fell  
 And hold hem lower than doeth the Lorde.

The whole of this tale shows the wretched, ignorant, and oppressed state of the people of England, under the domination of the popish clergy, in the fifteenth century. They have been emancipated by the Reformation ; and they will richly deserve the same thralldom, should they ever permit themselves to be entangled again under the same yoke of bondage.

11thly, "He taketh no reward against the innocent."

Assassinations were frequent in Asiatic countries ; and a despot had only to say to one of his dependants or slaves, "Go and bring the head of such a one," and the head was immediately brought ! In other cases, one despot was hired to destroy another, either by the poniard of the assassin, or by poison. Of these acts I could produce many authentic instances. And from this psalm, it does appear, that private assassinations were frequent in the time of the Psalmist. But the person who is here stated to be fit to sojourn in God's tabernacle, and finally to reside in the mountain of his holiness, is one who takes no reward against the innocent. He neither gives nor receives a BRIBE, to prevent justice, or injure an innocent man in his cause. The lawyer, who sees a poor man opposed by a rich man, and, though he is convinced in his conscience that the poor man has justice and right on his side, yet takes the larger fee from the rich man, to plead against the poor man, does, in fact, take a reward against the innocent ; and without the most signal interposition of the mercy of God, is as sure of perdition as if he were already in it. But, because such unprincipled lawyers have been found, it is most uncandid and wicked to apply the censure generally ;

though they have much in their power, and may deceive without detection, for law admits of many quibbles, and is, in many cases, the *pit of the bottomless deep* ; yet men of the highest honour and honesty are found in as great proportion among them as among others. Let those of a contrary character bear their blame, and either reform, or prepare to meet the God of justice.

Lastly, “He that doeth these things :” He, in whose character and conduct all these excellencies meet, though still much more is necessary under the Christian dispensation,—shall never be moved ; he shall stand fast for ever :—he is an upright honest man, fearing God, loving his fellows, and hating covetousness : God will ever be his support : HE shall dwell in the holy hill, after having served his Maker here in his generation.

Thus we have these two important questions answered,—*Who* can be considered a worthy member of the church militant upon earth ? And, *Who*, after life is ended, shall be received into heaven, and be for ever with the Lord ? The answer is, The man who, to faith in Christ Jesus, adds those eleven moral excellencies which have already been enumerated and explained ; who has been “freely justified through the redemption that is in Jesus ;” and has had the thoughts of his heart cleansed by the inspiration of God’s Holy Spirit ; he shall go to heaven—he shall be received into the paradise of God, and shall see him *as he is*. Amen.

To conclude : I hope the reader will not say, “This is Jewish doctrine, and teaches salvation by works.” I answer, It is God’s doctrine, whether it came by Jew or Gentile. And as to salvation by works, there is nothing of it in the text, and nothing in the comment. But it may be answered, “There is here too much strictness—God does not require so much from poor, weak, fallible

man." I answer, God requires whatsoever his word requires. He will not bring down the moral law to our weakness and fall ; but he will bring us up to it. Jesus Christ came to raise us from our fall, to strengthen us with strength in our soul ; he has made an atonement for our sins, and it is through his merits alone that we either get heaven, or the grace that qualifies us for it. But still you think, you may get to heaven without all these excellencies. Let your conscience answer the following questions. Will the man that is not upright—that does not work righteousness—that does not speak the truth in his heart, be saved ? Will the backbiter and slanderer—he who does evil to his neighbour, and takes up a reproach against him, get to heaven ? Will *he* get there, in whose eyes the vile person is honourable, and he who fears the Lord, despicable ? Will he who breaks his word, and falsifies his oath ; that is an oppressive usurer—takes bribes against the innocent, or to betray and sell his country at a general election—will he get to heaven ? If such persons can get to heaven, what honest man would wish to go thither ? And do you expect to go to heaven with all your imperfections on your head ? Then you are most awfully deceived. But you say, "you have faith in Christ ;" well—see that it be *sound*, for the devils *believe* and tremble. Did Christ come to destroy the moral law ? Does the gospel require holiness of heart and life ? You know it does. And do you believe this word, "Without holiness no man shall see God ?" And what does this psalm require, but that holiness of heart and life which the gospel everywhere requires ? Is the law against the promises of God, or the gospel of God against a holy life ? Then you must receive the grace of the gospel, that the law of the Spirit of life may make you free from the law of sin and death.

If you do these things, you shall *never be moved* ; you shall go from heaven below, to heaven above : but if you only believe them, and believe the gospel the same way, you shall be driven away in your iniquities, and go where you shall be *eternally moved* under the action of the worm that never dieth, and the fire that is never quenched. Go now to Christ, that he may purge your conscience from dead works, baptize you with the spirit of holiness, guide you by his counsel, and at last receive you into his glory. Amen.

TO  
RICHARD SMITH, JUN., ESQ.,  
&c., &c.,  
STOKE NEWINGTON.

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DEAR SIR,

I have not asked your permission to prefix your name to the following discourse. My reason is simple, and to myself cogent. I ask no patronage, howsoever respectable yours might be to me; and I beg no favours. Gratitude alone impels me; and it is not in the nature of gratitude to ask *permission* to express its obligations. It may be manifested in various ways; but without some kind of expression it cannot exist. By the present mode I take a liberty which, if I asked, you would not grant: it is, then, to tell my friends and the public, as far as this discourse may go, that you have from the beginning been the steady and practical friend of the Zetland Isles; that you have helped me to assist them in the most effectual manner, while you peremptorily refused to let your left hand know what your right hand did. It is true, that while your shadow has been extended over those northern regions, you have often been amply repaid by the good news which you heard from that distant land;—of the prosperity of a work of life and power unequivocally manifested in the salvation of multitudes, and in the relief and comfort of many widows and orphans, and of many others equally necessitous and destitute. You have their prayers, my gratitude,

and God's blessing. May the light of his countenance shine upon you and yours for ever ! Amen.

There is something singular, if not in the discourse, yet in the circumstances in which it was preached.

In the middle of last June, I sailed out of the Thames on purpose to make probably my last voyage to the Zetland Isles. Having arrived at Whitby, I was met by a few select friends, who wished to accompany me on my voyage : the Rev. James Everett, and Mr. W Read, of Manchester ; Mr. John Mosely Smith, of Stockport ; Rev. James Loutit, of Windsor ; Mr. John Campion, of Whitby, and my second son Theodoret, hired a vessel, the sloop Henry, Captain Greenwood, which we were to have at our command, to sail where and when we pleased, wind and weather permitting. As I intended to visit at least the different larger islands in the Zetland group, and the principal Voes or Bays, I well knew, from former experience, that this would be impossible, unless I had a vessel at my own command. In those islands there are no public roads ; and to travel over hills, through bogs, and to cross different Sounds and Voes in small crazy boats, would not only take up much time, but would be more harassing than it was at all likely my strength of body and state of health could sustain. We had an excellent passage, and our land-fall was Sumburgh Head, the south end of the Island of Mainland, to which we steered when we bore away from Whitby ; and so truly had we kept our course, that we could not say we had lost one foot of way, in a run of between 300 and 400 miles ! I will not trouble you with a detail of our operations while passing up the eastern side of those islands, in a direction due north. It is sufficient to say, we first touched at Lerwick ; then at the island of Whalsey ; Burra Voe, in South Yell ; Uya Isle and Uya Sound ; and then Balta Sound, in the island of

Unst, the most northern of this group. While we lay here, giving time to our captain to change his sand ballast for chromate of iron, I travelled over the high hills, composed almost entirely of serpentine rock, with little vegetable soil, and consequently little verdure, and passing Harold's-wick, where we left Mr. Everett to preach, I went on to Northwick, the farthest bay north on the eastern side of the Zetland Isles; a little beyond which, on Sabbath morning, July 6, I preached to some hundreds of people, gathered from various places and considerable distances, the following discourse.

The peculiar circumstances in the case I shall distinctly note. 1st. I stood now on the most northern ground under the dominion of the British crown, and on the most northern inhabited part of that ground. And, 2nd. On the line of direction in which I then stood, which was nearly due north, there was neither land nor inhabitant to the north pole. 3rd. In nearly a direct line east, I had Bergen in Norway on my right hand; and farther on, north, Spitsbergen; on my left, west, were the Faroe Isles; and onward, north-west, Iceland, and then Old Greenland. Between these, from Lamba Ness, the uttermost point north of the island of Unst, not one foot of land, nor consequently one human inhabitant, is to be found on to the north pole; so that I was literally preaching on one of the ends of the earth, beyond which, in that direction, the sound of the gospel can never be heard.

As I had a plain people to address, I endeavoured to make use of the plainest terms, yet still without bringing down divine things below the standard of their own dignity; and I believe the discourse was made a blessing to many that heard it.

Of the inhabitants of this island I can say the same as of all the isles in Zetland; they are a people with

good understanding and good sense, and in kindness and hospitality to strangers without parallel. If, in outward circumstances and geographical situation they have generally but two talents—if any people on the globe, from the south to the north pole, have made ten out of the two, it is the Zetlanders: nor have I ever met a people who more richly deserve the truth of the gospel, nor a people who more carefully keep nor more correctly adorn it.

I know you rejoice in their prosperity, and will bless God for their profiting. You have served them as the treasurer of that fund which is employed to build them places of worship; and you have never suffered the work to stand still, even when the bank was for a time exhausted. May your shadow be extended for ever, and may the sun of your prosperity never withdraw its shining! For the sake of Zetland, as well as on many other accounts,

I am, my dear Sir,  
Your much obliged, very grateful,  
and affectionate servant,

ADAM CLARKE.

*Heydon Hall, Middlesex,*  
*Aug. 23, 1828.*



## SERMON XXII.

### ACQUAINTANCE WITH GOD, AND THE BENEFITS WHICH RESULT FROM IT.

*A Discourse delivered in the ISLAND of UNST, in ZETLAND, the farthest Northern Possession of the British Crown,  
Sunday Morning, July 6th, 1828.*

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JOB xxii. 21—23.

21. "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace ; thereby good shall come unto thee.

22. "Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart.

23. "If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles," &c.

MORE important advice than this was never given to man, nor can any be more necessary at all times, nor be urged with more powerful motives ; nor is it possible that the terms of the advice can be explained by clearer directions.

I. The Advice : "Acquaint now thyself with him."

II. The Motives : "Thereby good shall come unto thee, and thou shalt be built up."

III. The Directions : "1. Receive the law from his mouth. 2. Lay up his words in thy heart. 3. Put away iniquity from thy tabernacles," &c.

The general meaning is this : "By getting an interest in the divine favour, and in having the soul brought into

a state of peace with him,—thereby, that is, in these *two* things, good will come unto thee. First, From an interest in his favour, thou mayest expect all necessary blessings. Second, From his peace in thy conscience, thou wilt feel unutterable happiness. But we must enter more particularly into a discussion of the important subjects contained in these verses, and examine the foundation and principles on which they rest. They require the deepest attention of the head, and the strongest affections of the heart.

Here we have to do with GOD and MAN; the *perfections* of the one, the *imperfections* and *necessities* of the other. Let us consider both.

I. With *whom* are we exhorted to *acquaint* ourselves? With GOD. *Who* is he? This is the most difficult of all subjects, the most sublime of all knowledge; but supposed to be, in a certain way, level to the apprehensions of men.

1. The apostle, speaking to the Corinthians, says, “Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.”

It appears, therefore, that they might have acquired knowledge, or their ignorance could not have been their reproach. There were many advantages which the heathen Greeks possessed; and by them, through his works, the eternal power and Godhead of the Creator might be known.

2. It is easy to speak *about* or *of* God; but to show *what* he is, how difficult! We can trace up every being to others of its own kind; there is a concatenation of causes and effects. We can trace an acorn to an oak, and that to another acorn, till we come to the first plant. We can trace a child to its parents; can conceive that these parents were once infants, whom we can trace to their parents, and so on, till we come to a first human

pair ; but to what can we trace these ? They did not produce themselves. St. Luke, in displaying a genealogy, begins at his own times, and goes from son to father, whom he finds to be the son of another father, and so on, till he comes to the last father in the ascending line, who could not be the author of his own being, and therefore he properly says, Adam, who was the son of God. This Being, therefore, is the Father of the spirits of all flesh. 1. In reference to man, he is the cause of all human existence. 2. And when we examine all other beings, we shall find that he is equally the cause of their existence.

3. But *who* is he ? If he be the *cause* of all being, he is necessarily *before* all being, and himself uncaused : this leads us at once into his eternity.

4. In ratiocination, the human spirit can go to God, and when it reaches him, it is lost in eternity ; not the idea of eternity, for of this it can form no idea. Nor can conjecture or fancy form any idea of anything, when it arrives at God, but God himself, and certain attributes necessarily inherent in him.

5. Here then we see God in his eternity, and no excursion of fancy can go beyond this : and what is the doctrine derivable from this ? Has any of those who have written and spoken on the being and attributes of God made any use of this grand fact ? I think not. But has it not an obvious meaning, and is it not this : In God human spirits are designed eternally to rest ;—they cannot go beyond him ; they can ascend by reasoning to him ; and this is their intended place—the end of their destination—their final abode.

6. But does the idea of God, *in* his eternity, and the knowledge that he is the *centre* where intelligent spirits can rest, necessarily show that these spirits must find happiness there ? No, not simply.

7. But as we find God to be the *cause* of all being, and find an infinity of being, endowed with various degrees of various perfections, and know that nothing can give what it does not possess; hence we learn that God must possess *various perfections*; and as he himself is infinite and eternal, all his perfections must be such.

1. He must be *wise*, and that wisdom infinite.
2. He must be *powerful*, and that power unlimited.
3. He must be *good*, and that goodness unbounded.
4. He must be *happy*, and that happiness infinitely perfect.

Every intelligent nature must be happy in proportion to the degree of its purity and goodness. God being pure and good, he is infinitely so, and therefore infinitely happy.

5. *Benevolence* is a necessary quality of goodness, and a desire to communicate itself necessarily belongs to *intelligent* goodness. 1. Hence God's creation of man and intelligent natures. He made them like himself, that they might derive endless happiness from himself. 2. Man, therefore, may be made a partaker of the divine nature. It is the *will* of God that it should be so; but man must *acquaint* himself with God that it may be so.

II. Let us look into MAN, and see *his* state. He is not at *peace*; he has not *good*.

1. He has various powers and faculties,—mighty and extensive; but they are in disorder and ruin. As he has not peace, men are in a state of hostility among themselves. As he is sinful, he has no good. He is therefore unhappy. He is torn by inward factions—conflicting passions: judgment and conscience at variance with passion and appetite. He suffers in himself what nations do who are in a state of warfare. In the latter case all confidence is destroyed; security of person

and property uncertain ; the apprehension of evil takes the place of hope ; treasure is exhausted, and the best blood of the land drained out for its defence. Issue as the contest may, there must be long misery and national distress.

Man is often at war with his fellows ; and ever with and in himself, condemning himself in the thing that he alloweth.

2. Yet he has what is called the hunger of the soul, an insatiable desire after peace and happiness. Good, substantial good, is the object of his desire ; he seeks it early and late ; he pursues it under various forms and various names ; but in order to get it he minds earthly things, animal pleasures, secular good, and worldly honours ; these when attained do not gratify, not only,  
1. Because they are not of the nature of the soul ; but,  
2. Because they are not eternal.

In the pursuit of these, life generally is spent, and vanity and vexation of spirit are written upon the whole.

Is the Father of the spirits of all flesh unmindful of all this ? No—his eye affects his heart ; he sees it with concern, because he wills the happiness of his intelligent offspring. And he shows this concern by this divine oracle, “ Acquaint thyself now with God, and be at peace, and thereby good shall come unto thee.”

That there should be any occasion for such an exhortation as that contained in the first verse of the text, is a reproach to man ; that it should be given by the inspiration of the Almighty, proves the goodness of God.

In order to understand these points clearly, I shall consider—

I. What is implied in acquaintance with God ?

II. What are the means by which this acquaintance is to be acquired ?

III. What are the benefits which result from this acquaintance.

I. What is implied in an acquaintance with God ?

The word *acquaint* signifies to gain knowledge of a person or thing, by association, familiar intercourse, conversation, and exact examination. Acquaintance signifies the knowledge that is acquired by such means. We say that we are acquainted with such a thing, book, or country, because we have examined the thing, read the book, or travelled through the country. When applied to a person, it signifies :—1. We have heard of him. 2. Have been in his company. 3. Have conversed with him. 4. Have not only interchanged compliments, but reposed confidence in him ; and thus, 5. Become familiar with him : and 6. This familiarity, supported by frequent intercourse, has been heightened into friendship. Hence *acquaintance* and *friend* have nearly the same meaning.

An intimate acquaintance is one thoroughly known ; and a very particular acquaintance is one with whom we not only interchange all the terms descriptive of friendship, but also all those affections which constitute the spirit of friendship : therefore—1. To hear of ; 2. To associate with ; 3. To hold conversation with ; 4. To become familiar with ; 5. To have confident communication with ; and 6. To take and to be taken into friendship with a person, are all implied in being thoroughly or intimately ACQUAINTED with him.

The word used here, which we translate *acquaint*, סָכַן *sakan*, signifies to *lay up*, as a treasure ; to procure an *interest in*. We lay up the treasure, in which we have the whole property, right, and interest, that we may have recourse to it whenever we please, and by it supply all our necessities. This notion of the word agrees very well with the spirit of this exhortation : consider that God

alone is the never-failing fountain of all good ; get an interest in him, secure his friendship and help ; and then no good will be wanting to you. This meaning of the place was perceived by Coverdale ; for in his Bible (the first ever published in the English language) he translates, “reconcile thyself to him ;” get an acquaintance with him, come into his presence, cease from thy enmity to him ; make supplication to thy Judge, implore forgiveness, pray to be received into his favour, and *thereby good*—all good essentially requisite to thy present and eternal welfare—shall come unto thee.

Having now considered the meaning of the word, the import of the exhortation will be the more easily perceived.

I have already stated, “that it is a reproach to man that such an exhortation should be necessary.” That there should be any human beings, where a divine revelation has come, found destitute of the knowledge of God, or that are unacquainted with their Maker and Redeemer, is a sore evil, and a high reproach indeed ; but it was so, even in a Christian church, in the time of St. Paul ; for he thus exhorts the people at Corinth, “Awake to righteousness, and sin not ; for some have not the knowledge of God : I speak this to your shame,” 1 Cor. xv. 35.

Let us examine this point intimately.

1. To be acquainted with God, we must—1. Hear of him : and have we not all heard of him ? Are not his lines gone out through the world, and his words to the ends of the earth ? Even to you, has the word of his salvation been sent ; you, who live here on a line a very little to the east of the north pole, between which and you there is not one human inhabitant, nor one foot of known land :—you have heard of him ; you have long had his Bible ; your forefathers have heard the word at

the lips of teachers sent by him, have been favoured with the means of grace, and have had such calls to acquaint yourselves with God, that the well-grounded hope of eternal glory might be ministered through those means according to these calls. Even these isles have waited for his salvation ; it has been long since sent, that in his arm you might trust. Have we ever duly considered what a mercy it is to have a Bible, to be able to read it, to hear it read, to have it explained ? What were your forefathers previously to their getting the Bible ? Were they not a nation of gross heathens, serving stocks and stones, rudely cut out in the forms of men and women ; of the sun and the moon ; of Thor, Woden, or Odin ; of Friga or Freya ; either imaginary beings, or ancient freebooters, pirates, cut-throats, and general profligates ? and these were worshipped with abominable and cruel rites, uncleanness, and human sacrifices. The principles of their religion we know ; they are still extant in Scandinavian books. A very ancient book called the Edda, written in the Icelandic language, one of the most correct and important MSS. of which is in my own possession, gives these principles in detail ; describes at large the acts of those who were the objects of their religious adoration ; uncovers their hell (the place of the evil being called *Loke*) ; and opens the gate of their heaven (*Asgard*, the habitation of their gods), and *Valhalla*, the celestial dwellings of their heroes. And what is this latter ? According to the Edda, it is the Hall of Odin, where his followers are to spend their duration in quaffing ale out of the skulls of their enemies ; and those very skulls out of which they had formerly drunk the blood of their owners ! Is it not an infinite mercy, that you and your neighbours, the Norwegians, Danes, Icelanders, and Swedes, the remains of the Gothic and Scandinavian tribes, have been saved from this cruel and degrading



superstition, by receiving the Bible instead of the Edda, by which they and you have been taught the knowledge of the true God? Your fathers worshipped in these mountains, over whose summits of serpentine rock I have this morning travelled, and to the north of which we now stand ; and imbibed instruction from their *scalds*, poets, and priests, in those inhuman and diabolic arts, by which they were taught to rob, plunder, butcher, and enslave their fellow-men ! Now, the peaceable words of the gospel of Jesus succeed to the ferocious strains of the Volu spa, and the dying song of Lodbrog ! Now, they and you have learnt that the Son of Man is come, not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. Ye have heard of Him who is the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and slow to wrath ; forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. Be ever thankful for that mercy that has turned you from so deep a darkness, to a light so truly marvellous.\*

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\* The EDDA, referred to above, is a work in the Icelandic language, and contains the mythology and complete religious system of the ancient Scandinavians, the people who occupied the kingdoms called Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and the islands dependant on those countries. Among those isles, the Zetland isles were numbered : from them they were peopled, and from them received the same religious system as that of their neighbours. Unst, being the nearest both to Iceland and Norway, was no doubt first peopled ; and the settlers brought their native paganism with them.

There are two books called Edda—the first compiled by Sæmund Froda, an Icelander, who was born in 1056. This work consists of a number of ancient poems, on mythological subjects, the chief of which are: 1. The Volu spa, or the prophecies of the virgin Vola. 2. The Havamaal, or Divine Discourse ; and 3. The Runa Pattur Othins, or magical chapter of Odin, or the magical works which can be performed by the use of the Runic characters. Of these metrical pieces, there are thirty-six in all, in this poetical Edda.

2. But in order to be *acquainted* with God, we must know him by having communion with him: that man is not an acquaintance of ours, with whom we never kept company; nor are we acquainted with that God, with whom we never had communion. And as we cannot be said to be acquainted with any person with whom we have never conversed, so we cannot be said to have

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The second Edda is all in prose, and is a collection of the mythology, theology, and philosophy of the Scandinavians, made by the very learned Snorro Sturlesson, about A. D. 1215. This also is in Icelandic. An edition of this was printed at Copenhagen, in 4to., 1665, by a Danish lawyer, *Resenius*, in the original Icelandic, with a Danish and Latin version, and copious notes.

An edition of the rhythmical Edda, that of Sæmund, was undertaken at Copenhagen, and the first vol. 4to., published in 1787, which was followed by a second volume in 1818: a third is promised. To the second volume, there is a copious and useful glossary.

From these volumes, the whole system of the very ancient Scandinavian idolatry may be gathered.

The following may give a general view:—

1. *Odin* or *Woden*, their supreme God, is there termed, “The terrible and severe deity—the father of slaughter—who carries desolation and fire—the tumultuous and roaring deity—the giver of courage and victory—he who marks out who shall perish in battle—the shedder of the blood of man,” &c. From him is the fourth day of our week denominated Wodensday or Wednesday.

2. *Friga* or *Freya*; she was his consort, called also *Heortha*, mother Earth. She was the goddess of love and debauchery—the northern Venus. She was also a warrior, and divided the souls of the slain with her husband, *Odin*. From her we have Friday or Freya’s day; as on that she was peculiarly worshipped. As was *Odin* on Wednesday.

3. *Thor*, the god of winds and tempests—thunder and lightning, he was the especial object of worship in Norway, Iceland, and consequently, in the Zetland isles. From him we have the name of our fifth day, Thor’s day, or Thursday.

4. *Tir*, the god who protects houses. His day of worship was called Tyrsday, or Tiisday, whence our Tuesday.

any acquaintance with that God with whom we never held intercourse by prayer. He that cometh unto God must know that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them who diligently seek him. By prayer, we approach the palace of the great King ; and by faith we enter

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As to our first and second days, Sunday and Monday, they derived their names from the sun and moon, to whose worship ancient idolators had consecrated them.

*Asgard* is their heaven, or court of their gods.

*Valhalla*, their paradise, the seat of Odin and his heroes, where they are represented as going through their martial exercises, then cutting each other to pieces ; afterwards all the parts healing, they sit down to their feast, where they quaff beer out of the skulls of those whom they had slain in battle, and whose blood they had before drank out of the same skulls, when they had slain them.

*Nifheim*, or Evil house, is their hell.

*Loke*, the Devil, or principle of evil.

*Hela*,—death. Of whom they give this description. Her palace is *anguish* ; her table, *famine* ; her waiters, *expectation and delay* ; her threshold, *precipice* ; and her bed, *leanness*.

All who die in battle go to *Valhalla*, Odin's palace, where they amuse themselves as stated above.

The Scandinavians offered different kinds of sacrifices, but especially human ; and from these they drew auguries by the velocity with which the blood flowed when they cut their throats, and from the appearance of the intestines, and especially the heart. It was a custom in Denmark to offer annually, in January, a sacrifice of 99 cocks, 99 dogs, 99 horses, and 99 men—besides other human sacrifices, offered on pressing occasions, public calamities, &c., in order to turn away the anger of their gods. Even in England, I fear, our ancestors partook much of the spirit and practice of the same horrible and barbarous superstition. It is no wonder that we say in our public service, when the gospel for the day is announced to be read : “ Thanks be to God for his holy gospel.” O what an ineffable blessing has the gospel been wherever it has been preached ! For more of those superstitions, see the *Edda*—*Mallet's Northern Nations* ; *Bartholinus de Causis contemptæ Mortis*, &c.

into that palace. We present our petitions, which he graciously receives; he speaks peace to his people, that they may not turn again to folly. Frequent intercourse with this most holy and gracious Being brings us to an acquaintance with his loving-kindness and tender mercy. They who pray not, know nothing of this God, and know nothing of the state of their own souls.

3. In an acquaintance such as that which the text recommends, there must be confidence: we would not form an acquaintance with a person in whom we could not confide; and if we found him to be a person of probity, our confidence would be in proportion to our acquaintance. It is impossible that we could enter at all into a consideration of the nature of God—of his goodness, mercy, and love, without feeling confidence that from that goodness all necessary good might be expected; all pardon and grace from that mercy, and all tenderness and compassion from that love. His promises we should consider as perfectly safe: he is faithful, and cannot deny himself. His promises are pledges given to men, which his goodness, mercy, and love will redeem. Hence confidence in him produces faith: we see from his power that he can do all things; and from his mercy, goodness, and truth, that he will do all that is necessary for those who put their trust in him. For all his promises are yea and amen, in our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus increasing confidence begets increasing faith, and this increasing faith is daily obtaining the fulfilment of his promises. He gives grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that trust in him, and walk uprightly.

4. This confidence will produce a holy familiarity: we shall seek for opportunities of increasing our acquaintance with one who is the Sovereign Good; without whom nothing is wise, or holy, or strong; and without whom,

we can neither know what is right, nor do what is holy and just. And this very conviction will tend to increase the spirit and practice of prayer, and, consequently, our communion with God.

5. Intimate acquaintance with a person, engendering mutual confidence, and begetting a pleasing familiarity, is very little short of what is termed friendship ; nor does there seem to be any difference between intimate acquaintance and special friendship. But however this may be, we well know that they who acquaint themselves with God, as above specified, will find him to be their friend, their highest, chiefest, and best friend,—a friend that loveth at all times,—that knows the souls of his followers in adversity ; that is untouched and uninfluenced by any kind of caprices, and on the permanency of whose friendship we may depend, while in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God we have our conversation in the world. Thus, while God is the friend of every true believer, of all who have got an acquaintance with him, every true believer is a friend of God. All these things are implied in being acquainted with him. My brethren, lay these things to heart, and see whether you have received this wise man's exhortation, " Acquaint now thyself with God."

6. But that translation of the original word which appears in Coverdale's Bible, the first complete Bible ever printed in the English language, must not be overlooked, " Reconcile thyself to him." Man is in a state of enmity with God ; he is a sinner against his Maker, a rebel against his sovereign, he is attainted of high treason by God's law, and is condemned to death ; and that death he must suffer if he be not reconciled to the great law-giver. Now this reconciliation supposes that the man ceases from his rebellious acts, and that with a penitent

soul he implores forgiveness from his offended Judge. We have already seen that thorough acquaintance will terminate in friendship ; a union of hearts and hands, where both parties seek each other's welfare and happiness. This state of friendship is impossible where the man is living in a way which proves his heart to be in a state of enmity to God. Can we suppose that a subject is reconciled, or in a state of friendship, with his king, who is breaking his laws daily, blaspheming his name, traducing his character, ridiculing and despising his government, teaching others to disobey the laws, making as many enemies to the constitution of his country as he can, and strengthening by all means in his power those who are already the enemies of the state ? Is not such a one the worst of felons ? Does he not deserve the most exemplary punishment ? Should not every peaceable, honest, loyal man abhor him ? Should he not be considered the nation's disgrace, and the public pest ? And should he not be avoided as a dangerous leper, infecting every place where he sojourns, and every person with whom he comes into contact ? All this is readily granted by every person who loves his own safety, honours the king, and seeks the peace of society. What shall we then say of the open sinner,—of the “cheap swearer, who through his open sluice lets his soul run for nought ?” Of the liar, whose heart is not true to God, nor his tongue to it, nor his actions to either ? Of the drunkard, who consumes his body, his health, and his substance ; who in the frenzy of inebriation may kill his mother ; or in the sottishness of continued tippling may fall into a pit, and be dashed to pieces ; or fall under a cart wheel, and be crushed to death ? And what shall we say of the more secret sinner ? He that cheats and defrauds, who has the false or deficient measure, and the bag with deceitful weights ? Of the

polished flatterer, who to promote his own interest invests another with a character, the qualities of which he has never borne ? Or of the specious hypocrite, who, while he pretends to all saintship, is destitute of holiness, whose religion is only a cloak to cover the deformities of his character ? Are not all these (and the catalogue might be vastly increased) enemies to God in their minds by evil propensities ; and in their lives by wicked works ? If these do not get reconciliation to their God, without doubt they shall perish everlastingly. To such I cry, Be reconciled to him, that ye perish not !

II. Seeing this acquaintance is of such importance, and this reconciliation is so absolutely necessary, and that man, naturally, is blind and sinful, it will be necessary next to inquire by what means these blessings are to be obtained.

We are not left to our own judgment to devise an answer to this important question : He who gives the exhortation has laid down the proper directions ; and they are the best parts of this speech delivered by Eliphaz the Temanite. I shall take them in order.

The first advice, in reference to this acquaintance and reconciliation, is, “Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth,” ver. 22.

What is the law that is here intended ? Those who contend that this book was written before the giving of the law, say that the law here mentioned is the seven precepts which Noah, after the flood, delivered to his sons, and they to their posterity. The precepts were in substance the following :

1. Obey judges, magistrates, and princes.
2. Avoid all idolatry, superstition, and sacrilege.
3. Avoid all blasphemy, perjury, and irreverent use of God's name.
4. Avoid all incest, and unnatural conjunctions.

5. Avoid all murder, battery, infliction of wounds, mutilations, &c.

6. Avoid all theft, fraud, and lying.

7. Eat no blood, nor any portion of animals cut off while the animal is alive. This we find is a custom among the Abyssinians even to the present time.

Others say, the *law of nature* is intended. Those who maintain that the Book of Job was written before the Law of Moses, are driven to such miserable shifts as these to support their hypothesis. I hesitate not to say, that the law of God given to the Israelites by the ministry of Moses, is that which is here intended; and it is called here by way of emphasis *תורה torah*, law; the real system and source of instruction, which contains *אמרי amrai*, his words, the words or sayings of God himself; consequently not the Noahic precepts, nor the law of nature, neither of which were ever written or registered as the words of God's mouth. As to the Noahic precepts, they are a rabbinical fable; and as to the law of nature, what is it, or what was known of it till God gave that law, which has been the source from which all just counsels and right precepts have flowed?

It is the law, or revelation from God, that must be studied and received, in order to know God, to get acquaintance with him in his holiness and purity; and to know what is the desert of sin, and how a sinner is to be reconciled to his Maker. This is to be received as God's own words, as proceeding immediately from himself, stamped with his authority, and that law by which every sinner shall be tried. That law not only shows the holiness of God, and the sinfulness of sin, but also the means of reconciliation. In it the whole sacrificial system is laid down; and this pointed out the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the true Sacrifice prefigured by the various sacrifices prescribed by the law.



We see in the immolation and death of the victims under the law what every sin deserves, viz., death ; and we see by the sacrifice of Christ that no sinner can expect reconciliation to God, and remission of sins, but through his offering, for God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. And we must receive the law that declares these things from his mouth ; not be content with merely reading our Bibles, or with the general acknowledgment that this word is a revelation from God ; we must read and hear it as if God spake it now from his mouth to our ears. Thus we shall feel its authority, and tremble at his word. There is a great difference between simply reading the Scripture, and receiving it as *from the mouth of God*. What man says to us may mislead us ; do not take the sayings of men for any thing that concerns the salvation of your souls : see what God has said ; believe this alone implicitly. Do not deceive yourselves by the common saying, “God is merciful, and we shall fare as well as others.” It is true that God is merciful ; but he shows mercy to them who truly turn to him ; he will not prostitute his mercy on them who run on in their evil ways ; and as to faring as well as others, if these others be like yourselves, living in sin, without acquainting themselves with God, you will, it is true, *fare as well as they* ; for the wicked shall be turned into hell, with all them that forget God. Nor will the *multitude* of the damned alleviate the punishment of any *individual* in the wretched mass. You need not perish, for God has devised means that your banished soul may not be endlessly expelled from him.

The second direction is, “Lay up his words in thy heart.” The heart is often taken to express all the faculties of the soul, especially the conscience and understanding. The spirit of this direction is, Take a serious view of what God has spoken ; see that you

understand it; and if you understand it, endeavour to feel it; ask conscience whether you be the person of whom God speaks? whether you have ever repented and turned from those iniquities which God reprehends? whether God for Christ's sake have forgiven them? and whether he have given you the *witness of his Spirit*, that it is so? David says, he hid the word of God in his heart, that he might not sin against him. Have you done so? Having received the words of his mouth into your heart, do you retain them there? If you have received the word of reproof and conviction; if, by it, the Spirit of God have convinced you of sin, righteousness, and judgment, then you are prepared for the next direction.

Thirdly, "Return to the Almighty." Our blessed Lord represents a sinner under the figure of a silly sheep which has strayed away from the flock, and from under the care of the shepherd, and has wandered into the wilderness, exposed to destruction, not only because it is gone from under the shepherd's eye, but on account of its exposure to destruction by means of ravenous beasts. And for such a stray sheep there is no safety but in being brought back to the flock, and again placed under the shepherd's care. This direction therefore is of great moment; you must "return to the Almighty." Stop, sinner! whither art thou going? Art thou not already on the precipice—on the verge of destruction? A little farther, and the gulf is shot, and the horrible pit is closed upon thee for ever! After stopping and considering, "return to the Almighty;" his parental voice may still be heard; has he not said, "Let the wicked man forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Remember who it is to whom you are to return; it is to the Almighty, he who is able

to save if you do return ; and he who is able to destroy if you do not. Satan, as a roaring lion, is going about, seeking whom he may devour. If you be a sinner against God and your own soul, you are fair prey for this devourer ! “The lion hath roared,” will you not fear ? “The Lord hath spoken,” therefore his servants must prophesy. They must warn the wicked, that they may not have to answer for his blood at the judgment-seat of Christ. But in and through all this, hear the expostulating voice of your heavenly Father : “WHY will ye die, O house of Israel ?” “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you together, as a hen doth her brood under her wings, but ye would not !” To refuse such invitations—to stop the ear against such entreaties—to harden the heart against such compassionate calls—demand the most exemplary judgments. A remedy is provided, but they who sin against that only remedy must of necessity perish. It is the ALMIGHTY that calls ; and none less than the ALMIGHTY can save ; and remember, that because he is the Almighty he is able to punish ; and that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Fourthly, “Put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles.” You must not only put away your own sins, cease from your evil companions, allow yourself no indulgence in any secret sin ; but you must give heed that iniquity be not tolerated in your tabernacle, your household or family. Teach your children, your servants, and all that are connected with you, the fear of the Lord. Let your house be a house of prayer, not a den of thieves ; let not the idle, the vain, the profligate, or profane, have a place in your domestic establishment. If such be your neighbours, hold no intimacy with them. See also that there be no ill-gotten property in your house. See that if you have defrauded any, you have made or will make

immediate restitution. See that there be no trick or deception in the mode of managing your business, disposing of your wares, buying from the manufacturer, or selling to the consumer. Most people have not only easily besetting sins in their constitution, but also easily besetting sins in their trade and mode of conducting their business. All this must be *put away*, and as the text says, *put FAR away*. Let not your gain have God's curse in it for a canker, because it is not honestly acquired; but see that you have his blessing in your basket and your store, because you have provided things honest in his sight, who searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins.

One great point yet remains; and with this, Job's friend Eliphaz, who gives this exhortation and these directions, could be but slightly acquainted; and that is, the return to the Almighty through the Mediator; and the reconciliation to him through the sacrificial offering of him who was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

If we take the word *הִשְׁכֵּן* *hasken*, which our translators render *acquaint*, and which Coverdale, our earlier translator and martyr, rendered *reconcile*, it will open a rather different sense at first view, though it may lead ultimately to the same end. Strictly speaking, no man can reconcile himself to God, though he may be said to do so who uses God's appointed means of reconciliation in the way that he has himself appointed. We learn that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself;" and the apostle gives us to understand that the whole gospel is a ministry of reconciliation. See 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, 20: "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in

Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them ; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us ; we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." A short paraphrase on the above words is all that can be necessary in reference to the translation of our text given by Coverdale. God is here said to have reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ. As he has given Christ to die for sinners, they have through him access to God ; for his sake and on his account God can receive them ; and it is only by the grace and spirit of Christ that the proud, fierce, and diabolic nature of man can be changed and reconciled to God ; and by and through this sacrifice God can be propitious to them ; for the grace of Christ alone can remove the enmity of man. As the word reconciliation signifies in the original a thorough change, the grand object of the gospel is to make a thorough change in men's minds and manners ; but the first object is the removal of enmity from the heart of man, that he may be disposed to accept of the salvation which God has provided for him ; for the enmity of the heart is the grand hinderance to man's salvation. Christ, by his offering upon the cross, made atonement for the sin of the world, and thus laid the foundation of reconciliation between God and man. The apostles, and all their genuine successors in the Christian ministry, have the word or doctrine of reconciliation. They state the doctrine, show the necessity of it, and entreat men to accept the mercy which God has provided for them. The whole of this gospel ministration is simple, short, and plain, and may be thus summed up :

1. You believe that there is a God.

2. You know he made and preserves you.

3 In consequence it is your duty to love and serve him.

4. To show you how to do this, he has given a revelation of himself, which is contained in his law and gospel, which you are commanded to receive.

5. You have broken this law, and incurred the penalty, which is death.

6. Far from being able to undo your offences, or make reparation to the offended majesty of God, your hearts, through the deceitfulness of sin, are blinded, hardened, and filled with enmity against your Father and your Judge.

7. To redeem you from this most wretched and accursed state, God, in his endless mercy, has given his Son for you, who has assumed your nature, and died in your stead.

8. In consequence of this, he has commanded, that repentance and remission of sins shall be preached to all mankind in his name.

9. All who repent of their sins, and return to the Almighty, believing in Christ, as having died for them, as a sin-offering, shall receive remission of sins.

10. And if they abide in him by that faith which worketh by love, they shall have an eternal inheritance among them that are sanctified. This is the sum and substance of the doctrine of reconciliation : and whether this were in the mind of Eliphaz when he gave Job the exhortation in the text, or not, it is essentially necessary in every exhortation to sinners, constructed on Christian principles. In order, then, to acquaint yourselves with God, to be reconciled to him, and to be saved unto eternal life, apply to him through the Son of his love, who died for your offences, and rose again for your justification.

III. I come now to consider the benefits which result to man through this acquaintance with God.

They are many and important, and may be seen here, either in the text or context.

Eliphaz first makes a general statement—"Thereby good shall come unto thee." The preceding words, "Be at peace," seem to be rather intended to point out the benefit of the acquaintance here recommended, than any part of the exhortation here used. In this way they were understood by translators, both ancient and modern ; and in this sense I shall take them.

2. "Good shall come unto thee,"—בָּרָם *bahem*, in them ; i. e., in acquaintance with God, and the peace or prosperity of soul which follows. Thou shalt have the supreme good. 1. The pardon of all thy sins. 2. The sanctification of thy nature. 3. The witness of the Holy Spirit in thy conscience that thou art born of God, and passed from death unto life. 4. A right to the tree of life, and, through the blood of the covenant, to the eternal inheritance.

Peace, שָׁלוֹם *shalom*, signifies, as used in the Bible, prosperity of all kinds : health of body, peace of mind, and prosperity in all lawful worldly affairs : all these are included in the word *good*—good shall come unto thee, good to thy body, good to thy soul, good to thy family, good in time, and good in eternity. To know God in the proper experimental sense of the word, is not only to be acquainted with the fountain of happiness, but to drink of the water of life. To be reconciled to God, is to have a title to eternal glory, and a right to the tree of life : to enjoy his favour is better than the present life, with every earthly blessing which can possibly be enjoyed. To have peace with God, and peace in the conscience, is to have an ineffable feast, with quietness and assurance for ever. To have communion with God, and

his Spirit to witness with ours that we are his children, is to have life in its plenitude of satisfaction; and a glorious prospect of blessedness in that future state where neither *natural* nor *moral evil* can ever come. These are general declarations relative to the happy consequences of being acquainted with the true God, and knowing Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent.

But Eliphaz enters into a detail of blessings and advantages which should be enjoyed by him who received his word of exhortation.

1. "Thou shalt be built up"—not only the lapsed state of thy affairs shall be repaired, and thou shalt have every good that is essentially necessary for thee in this life, but thou shalt have God for thy continual protector.

Though *building up* may in general signify an increase of property, and especially of children, which were considered the chief riches among the patriarchs, Israelites, and Asiatics in general, and a promise of this kind must be very acceptable; yet *fortifying* and *protecting* may be that which is here principally intended. In all parts of Arabia attacks on the houses and property of individuals were frequent; and to prevent suffering in this way, every house was a sort of fortification; a wall being built round the house, too high to be easily scaled, and a very low door in that wall, through which an Arab, who scarcely ever dismounts from his horse, could not pass.

The monks of St. Catherine, who have a monastery on the top of Mount Sinai, dare not even have a door in their monastery; they are literally built up, and everything that is received from below, comes in a basket let down from the top of the wall by means of a rope and pulley. Both persons and goods go and come in this way. To this kind of building up, Eliphaz seems to refer. And as this was considered a sufficient protection



in a general way, so God's building up must be universally safe and sufficient. His providence is the grand fortification ; it is not only a protection, but a source of support. The inhabitant shall dwell in safety ; his bread shall not fail, and his water shall be sure. From such a tabernacle, the wicked—the practisers of iniquity, aggression, and wrong, shall be put far away. To such the promise by the prophet, who also alludes to depredations of this kind, shall be amply fulfilled : “ In righteousness shalt thou be established : thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear ; and from terror, for it shall never come near thee.” Isai. liv. 14.

In such a country, and in such circumstances, what a support must such a promise be, when the words were known to be spoken by Him who cannot lie ! To the case of Job these things strongly apply. He lived in Uz, in Idumea ; and he himself, as well as all his friends, were Edomite Arabs. His oxen and asses had already been carried away by a marauding company of Sabæans, a people who dwelt in Arabia Deserta, on the east of Uz. The Chaldeans, who carried away his camels, were a banditti of the same kind.

By promising such protection against such marauders, Eliphaz insinuates his general charge against Job, viz., that he must be a bad man, else he could not have been subjected to such losses and disasters.

2. He promises him great secular prosperity. “ Thou shalt lay up gold,” &c. Godliness is profitable for all things. The man who in the days of his forgetfulness of and rebellion against God, spent much property in riotous living, on his conversion to God ceases from all those evils, and consequently saves that which he before spent and squandered away : again, the blessing of God rests upon him, and on the work of his hands ; thus he both *gains* and *saves*. I have known many who thus

became rich ; and while they continued to help the poor, and the work of God, they “laid up gold as dust, and fine gold as the stones of the brooks.” And I have known several cases also, in which God brought back the captivity, when the good he had placed in their hands they put in their hearts, gaining all they could, and keeping all they got : in a word, they ceased to help God’s poor, and God’s cause, and then he withdrew the hand of his help from them, and left them the earth for their portion, or stripped them of that in which they trusted, that they might return to him from whom they had revolted. Thus God gave in mercy ; and in mercy he took away.

3. He promises that the Almighty will be the defence both of him and his property : “Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver,” ver. 25. In the 23rd verse (see under number 1), he promises him personal protection—“Thou shalt be built up ;” but here he promises the same protection for his goods and property : he shall increase his substance ; and God will not permit him to be deprived of it by disasters in trade, nor by the hand of fraud, deceit, or robbery. It is not to be wondered at, that, while a man makes a proper use of God’s bounty, the Giver will take care to preserve his own gift. We lose because we do not properly credit God’s promises, and we lose more because we do not plead them.

4. He farther gives Job to understand that he shall not only have that content and comfort that arise from having all necessities, conveniences, and comforts of life at his command, but he shall have the favour of God, and true happiness in the enjoyment of that favour : “Then thou shalt have thy delight in the Almighty”—Thou shalt feel him to be thy portion ; for while thy body lives on his earthly bounty, thy soul shall be fed

and nourished by that bread that comes down from heaven, and endures unto eternal life, ver. 26.

5. He shows farther, that, in consequence of his acquainting himself with God, he shall have great confidence in him, and much communion with him : “Thou shalt lift up thy face unto God,” *ibid.* This expresses great confidence ; and especially that which results from a sense of God’s mercy in the forgiveness of sins. It is an old saying, “He who has got his pardon, may look his prince in the face.” Guilt felt in the conscience produces confusion of face : how can he look up to God, who knows he has been a rebel against him, and has no evidence that his sin is forgiven, or that God has adopted him into his family ? But when he feels that God has forgiven him his sins, when he has taken fully the exhortation, Acquaint now thyself with him—be reconciled to thy offended God ; then, and not till then, can he lift up his face to God, see his Father and Friend in the person of his Judge ; then he has boldness towards God, and shall not be ashamed when he stands even before the judgment-seat.

6. He promises him great success in all his approaches to his Maker : “Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee,” ver. 27. The original is very emphatic, *תפתח* *taftir*, thou shalt open or unbosom thyself—thou shalt find freedom of access to the throne of grace, thou shalt have the spirit of prayer ; for the spirit of prayer flows from the spirit of adoption ; and when the HEART prays, GOD hears ; and it is encouraged to pray on, by the answers it receives. The text adds, “Thou shalt pay thy vows.” He who enjoys the favour of God is full of good resolutions : and as these resolutions spring from God’s grace, and are formed in his strength, so they are brought to good effect : the vows of living to him who has been so merciful and kind to them, are

paid ; every new blessing is a new reason why they should love him more and serve him better ; they feel this to be their duty and their interest ; they vow and pray on ; are supported, and enabled to pay their vows.

7. Such shall have success in all their good resolutions : “Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee,” ver. 28. “The liberal man deviseth liberal things : and by liberal things shall he stand.” This is the doctrine of a prophet superior to Eliphaz ; but the sentiment is nearly the same with that which the latter here expresses. Loving God with all the heart, and our neighbour as ourselves, is a disposition from which much glory may be purposed to the Supreme Being, and much good to our fellows. The holy man decrees both, and God who was with his heart to decree, will be with his head and his hand to accomplish : and it is truly wonderful to see how much good such persons decree or resolve, and how much they are enabled to effect ! Benevolence and beneficence are the component parts of love : a genuine Christian incessantly wills well, or is benevolent ; and according to his power—the means which God’s grace and strength furnish—is beneficent ; he wills well, and he does well.

8. The concluding advantage of this acquaintance and reconciliation to God, is the promise of his continual approbation and blessing : “The light shall shine upon thy ways,” *ibid.* The *light* is God’s approbation, 1st. In the *soul* ; 2nd. On the *providential path*—thou shalt never walk in darkness—thou shalt have no uncertainty concerning the blessedness of thy state—thou shalt constantly know that thou art of God by the spirit which he hath given thee.

Those who are acquainted with God, and reconciled to him, walk in the light, as He is in the light ; they have communion with him, and with all who are like minded,

and feel that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth them from all sin ; so they continue to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. They have also his blessing in their basket and in their store ; in the work of their heads and the labour of their hands. It is the will of God that they should have that measure of prosperity in all their secular affairs, as shall enable them to owe no man anything, and to provide things honest in the sight of all men ; therefore, acquaint thyself with God,—and let this be done now. There is not a moment to lose. Death is at the door. The tabernacle is decaying in all, and with some already in decay. Therefore,

Acquaint thyself now with him, because thou mayest have no other time, and eternity is at hand.

Let this acquaintance now take place, because of the great happiness thou mayest receive.

Because of the perdition with which thou art threatened.

Thou shalt have *peace*, שלום *shalom*, prosperity—whatever may contribute to thy present and eternal happiness. Thou shalt have peace with God ; peace in thy own conscience ; peace with every man ; and prosperity of soul at all times.

Thus ends the account of the benefits which result from an acquaintance and reconciliation with God.

Nothing remains now but to press you to attend more particularly to the exhortation in the text. And can there be more powerful motives to this than the wonderful benefits which are the result of this acquaintance ? Listen to your own interests, and you will listen to the text. Shut not your eyes against the light, and it will show you how to walk and to please God. It is of God's mercy that you are called to this acquaintance ; but though that mercy in itself endureth for ever, yet your

day of probation may have a speedy end. Hence the text says, “ Acquaint thyself *now* with him.” The season of grace and life neglected, all is lost. You have not a moment to lose. No people on earth hold their lives more precariously than the inhabitants of these northern isles. You are ever exposed to more dangers,—you who go down to the sea in ships, and transact your most laborious business in light skiffs on the deep waters of these tempestuous seas,—than the men who till the earth for their subsistence. Above all others you should ever stand ready to meet your God. With him, as your Father, Friend, and Preserver, you should be deeply acquainted—to him you should be reconciled through the blood of his Son.

Slight not the exhortation in the text, and neglect not his, who is come more than a thousand miles by sea and land to second the exhortation, and to beseech you in Christ’s stead to be reconciled to God. Love to your souls has caused Jesus Christ to shed his blood for you—and love to your souls and your country has led your preacher, fast bordering on threescore years and ten, to come to the uttermost northern bounds of the British dominions, to show and prove to you that God loves you ; and that he wills you should come to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved with all the power of an endless life. O my friends, my brethren, acquaint *now* yourselves with this good, gracious, and merciful God ; and thereby good, ineffable good, will come unto you. Amen.

## SERMON XXIII.

### LOVE TO GOD AND MAN, THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS.

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MATTHEW xxii. 35—40.

35. “Then one of them, *which was* a lawyer, asked *him a question*, tempting him, and saying,

36. “Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

37. “Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38. “This is the first and great commandment.

39. “And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

40. “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

THE love we owe to God and man, the subject of these verses, is of the very greatest importance, and should be well understood by every man, as we are assured by our Lord himself that the whole of religion is comprised in thus loving God and our neighbour.

But what is religion? And what is the *true* religion? These are questions that have been seriously asked by some who were inquiring the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, and earnestly wishing to know how they might escape the perdition of ungodly men; and a simily inquiry has been made captiously by others, from a supercilious incredulity, taking for granted that their

question could not be solved in a satisfactory manner. The Christian religion is a revelation from God himself, giving a knowledge of his own being, attributes, and works ; and of man, his nature, present state, and necessities ; showing also the way in which the whole human race may have all their spiritual wants supplied, their souls delivered from evil passions, and be made partakers of a divine nature, escape the corruption that is in the world through evil desire, and, being made truly holy, become in consequence contented and happy, and stand in a continual preparation for the blessedness of the eternal world.

But how is this religion, this holiness, content, and happiness, to be acquired ? “In itself,” say objectors, “it seems impossible, in such a state of imperfection and sinfulness as the present is ; and, whatever may be stated by theory, fact and general experience seem to prove that such a state cannot be enjoyed on earth ; and if to be in such a state be what is termed true religion, and no such state is to be found below—then there is no such thing as this true religion,—or—it was not made for the sons of men.” But do such assertions as these prove that the objectors have deeply considered the subject ? Is it after the fullest investigation of the question that they have come to this conclusion ? Or is this an echo of the wicked word of a lying world, that knows as little of God as of his religion ; and goes on sowing to the flesh, and of it reaping corruption and ruin ? But, should there be any honest seriousness in such objectors, a proper consideration of our Lord’s words in the text, will, I hope, lead them to form a different conclusion.

The occasion of this discourse was as follows : A lawyer, apparently of the sect of the Pharisees, who had been present when our Lord had confounded the Hero-



dians, ver. 16—22 ; and had silenced the Sadducees, ver. 23—32 ; hoping to succeed better than the former, as having a better cause, came forward, questioned him, and said, “ Master, which is the great commandment of the law ? ”

As the word *lawyer*, in its common acceptation among us, may mislead, as it has not the same meaning in the New Testament, it may be necessary to make a few observations upon it.

The word *νομικος*, signifies “ a teacher of the law ; and thus our ancient Anglo-Saxon version, *æ-lapeop*, a *law-teacher*, or a *doctor of the law*. These teachers of the law were the same as the scribes, or what Dr. Wotton calls letter-men, whom he supposes to be the same as the Karaïtes, a sect of the Jews who rejected all the traditions of the elders, and admitted nothing but the written word. These are allowed to have kept more closely to the spiritual meaning of the law and the prophets than the Pharisees did ; and hence the question proposed by this lawyer, who in Mark xii. 28 is called “ one of the scribes,” was of a more spiritual and refined nature than those proposed by the Herodians and Sadducees already mentioned. But this question, however good in itself, was not candidly proposed by this law-teacher ; “ he asked, tempting him,” trying to convict him of ignorance, or to confound him by subtlety.

To connect this the better with the context, and see the situation in which our blessed Lord was now placed, it will be necessary to observe, that we have here exhibited to our view *three* kinds of enemies and false accusers, that rose up against our Lord ; and the three sorts of accusations brought against him, viz. :

1. The Herodians, or politicians or courtiers belonging to Herod, who form their questions and accusations

on the rights of the prince and matters of state ; they came forward with, “Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?” ver. 17.

2. The Sadducees or libertines, who founded their question upon matters of religion and articles of faith, which themselves did not believe. Hence they propose a question concerning the resurrection, and that provision of the Mosaic law which states, “If a man take a wife, and he die childless, his brother shall take his widow, and raise up a posterity, that shall succeed to the first brother’s estate, and to all his rights and privileges.” “Master, Moses said,” &c., ver. 24.

3. The Pharisees, whether scribes or Karaïtes, who were all hypocritical pretenders to devotion : they came and proposed a question on that vital and practical godliness, the love of God and man, of which they wished themselves to be thought the sole proprietors, “Master, which is the great commandment?” ver. 36.

To this question our Lord immediately answers, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind ; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

In these two commandments mention is made of three kinds of love ; viz., 1. The love we owe to God ; 2. The love we owe to our NEIGHBOUR ; 3. The love we owe to OURSELVES. These must not be confounded ; and to prevent this, a correct definition should be given of each ; for the term *love*, in relation to God, to our neighbour, and to ourselves, does not present the same sense, though all partake of the same radical idea.

Though we may define the term, which however is not very easily done, yet the thing is extremely difficult ; and philosophers, critics, and divines have spent their strength on it. Scarcely any definition yet given is sufficiently simple. That the thing itself has for its basis

esteem and desire, there can be little doubt. Dr. South, whose definition has been admired, has rather described the effects than the principle. "Love," says he, "is such an affection as cannot so properly be said to be in the soul, as the soul to be in that. It is the great instrument of nature, the bond and cement of society, the spirit and spring of the universe. It is the whole man wrapt up in one desire."

When we see goodness and excellence, we cannot but esteem them ; and the possessor of them seems peculiarly entitled to our respect. Aware of the utility of such virtues, we cannot but desire their acquisition. If the possession of the person or thing in which these reside be possible, we earnestly desire that possession. Esteem and desire produce anxiety and strenuous endeavour to gain this possession ; and the ardour of the desire will be in proportion to the view we have of that goodness and excellence, and the conviction we feel of their being necessary to our happiness. Hence, indeed, it may be said, *the whole man is wrapt up in one desire.*

But as the term *love* is that on which the whole strength of these commandments rests, it will be necessary to inquire here also into its grammatical or literal meaning, as was found to be expedient in other places.

The word *αγαπη*, from *αγαπαω*, *I love*, is variously compounded and derived by lexicographers and critics. I shall produce those which seem to bear the most directly on the subject. *Αγαπη* is supposed to be compounded of *αγαν* and *ποιειν*, "to act vehemently or intensely ;" or of *αγειν κατα παν*, because love is always active, and will work in every possible way ; for he who loves is with all his affection and desire carried forward to the beloved object, in order to possess and enjoy it. Some derive it from *αγαν* and *πανεσθαι*, "to be completely at rest, or to be in-

tensely satisfied" with that which he loves ; and this resting completely on it, because perfectly satisfied with it, constitutes essentially what is called love. Others derive it from *αγα*ν and *παω*, because a person eagerly embraces and vigorously holds fast that which is the object of his affection. Lastly, others suppose it to be compounded of *αγαω*, *I admire*, and *παυομαι*, *I rest*, because that which a person loves intensely, he rests in with fixed admiration and contemplation. This shows that genuine love changes not, but always abides steadily attached to that which is the sole object of its regard.

Our English term *love*, we have from the Anglo-Saxon *lofa* or *lufa*, from *lufan* and *lufian*, to *desire*, *love*, *favour*, *cherish* ; and both are most probably derived from the Teutonic, *leben*, to *live*, because love is the means, dispenser, and preserver of life ; and without it life would have nothing desirable, nor indeed anything even supportable. The Latin *amo*, *I love*, has been derived by Minshieu from the Hebrew *חמה* *chamah*, to burn, to waste and dry up, parch : and considering it is an animal affection, having an animal object, this is sufficiently descriptive of its nature and effects ; hence these Leonine verses,—

Nescio quid sit amor ; nec amo, nec amor, nec amavi,  
At scio, si quis amat, uritur igni gravi.

I do not know what love is ; I do not love, I am not loved, nor have I loved. But this I know, that whosoever is in love, is burnt up by a strong fire.

This is the effect of hopeless love, where it is intense and undivided. So the poet, who in the following lines has painted it in a very affecting manner :—

She never told her love ;  
But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,  
Feed on her damask cheek ; she pin'd in thought ;

And with a green and yellow melancholy,  
 She sat like patience on a monument,  
 Smiling at grief. Was not this love indeed ?

If I understand them right, it is in this way, and with this kind of love, that some ascetic or mystical writers would have us love God. And under the influence of such a feeling, many of them pined till their moisture was turned to the drought of summer, and they died in a sort of languishing ecstasy ! But this is not the love in the text : it is all intensely sublime and spiritual, pure and holy. It has nothing earthly, nothing animal, or fleshly in it. It is a pure flame, that has come from God, changing and refining our whole nature, and returning all its ardours back to himself ; for there is nothing on earth to which it can attach itself as a source from which it can derive gratification and contentment. It is as much health to the body as it is health to the soul.

Whatever may be thought of the preceding etymologies, as being either just or probable, one thing will be evident to all those who know what love means, that they throw much light upon the subject, and manifest it in a variety of striking points of view.

The ancient author of a MS. Greek Lexicon, in the Royal Library at Paris, under the word *αγαπη*, has the following definition : *Ασπαστος προθεσις επι τη φιλια του φιλουμενου—Συμψυχια*—“ A pleasing surrender of friendship to a friend—an identity or sameness of soul.” This love is a sovereign preference given to one above all others, present or absent ; a concentration of all the thoughts and desires in a single object, which is preferred to all others. Now, apply this definition to the love which God requires of his creatures, and you will have the most correct view of the subject. Hence it appears, that by this love the soul cleaves to, affectionately

admires, and consequently rests in God, supremely pleased and satisfied with him as its portion; that it acts *from* him as its author, *for* him as its master, and *to* him as its end; that by it all the powers and faculties of the mind are concentrated in the Lord of the universe; that by it the whole man is willingly surrendered to the Most High; and that through it an identity or sameness of spirit with the Lord is acquired—the person being made a partaker of the divine nature, having the mind in him that was in Christ, and thus dwelling in God, and God in him.

But how is this love to be applied in the present case, and in what manner? Why it occupies the whole man, in all his powers of body and mind. God says, and Christ here repeats it, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, and mind.” In the parallel place, Mark xii. 30, the whole passage reads thus, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy STRENGTH;” the same word is added in the parallel place, Luke x. 27. I shall consider it therefore as a part of the text, which indeed is supported, not only by those two evangelists, but by several MSS., and by the Syriac and Ethiopic Versions. I grant, however, that it is an addition made by our Lord, for it is not in the original Hebrew. With this addition, the original runs thus,—*Αγαπησεις κυριον τον Θεον σου, εν ὅλῃ τη καρδια σου και εν ὅλῃ τη ψυχῃ σου, και εν ὅλῃ τη διανοια σου [και εν ὅλῃ τη ισχυι σου]*.

1. What then is implied in loving God with all the HEART?

The heart is generally considered the seat of the affections and passions—the place of hopes, wishes, desires, appetites, and the like; and he loves God with all his heart, who loves nothing in comparison of him, and

nothing But in reference to him ; who is ready to give up, do, or suffer anything in order to please and glorify him ; who has in his heart neither love nor hatred, hope nor fear, inclination nor aversion, desire nor delight, but as they relate to God, and are regulated by him. No man can love God with his whole heart, if the desire of the world, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life be not separated from it.

Such a love, that Being who is infinitely perfect, good, wise, powerful, beneficent, and merciful, merits and requires from his intelligent creatures ; and in fulfilling this duty the soul finds its perfection and felicity ; for it rests in the source of goodness, and is penetrated with incessant influences from him who is the essence and centre of all that is amiable ; for he is the God of all grace. This is the love which an intelligent creature owes especially to its CREATOR, a servant to his Almighty MASTER, a son to his most affectionate FATHER. This love is founded on all the attributes of the Deity, includes all sorts of duties, and is binding both on angels and men. It calls forth all the powers and faculties of an intelligent being into action ; and directs their operations to the accomplishment of the most important purposes, and the attainment of the most excellent ends. To this love of God all should submit, everything give place, and to it everything should be referred.

He who can thus love his Maker must have his heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, and feel in consequence that Christ dwells in his heart by faith, and has rooted and grounded him in his love.

2. What is implied in loving God with all the SOUL ?

He loves God with all his *soul*, *εν ὅλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ*, *with all his LIFE*—who is ready to give up his *life* for his sake—who is ready to endure all sorts of torments, and to be deprived of all kinds of comforts, rather than dishonour

God. He who employs life, with all its comforts and conveniences, to glorify him in, by, and through all—to whom life and death are nothing but as they come from and lead to God—who labours to promote the cause of God and truth in the world, denying himself, taking up his cross daily—neither eating, drinking, sleeping, resting, labouring, toiling, but in reference to the glory of God, his own salvation, and that of the lost world. He lays out his life for God, spends it for God, and can be a confessor or martyr, rather than defile his conscience and grieve the Spirit of God by doing or professing anything that is not according to his eternal truth. From this divine principle sprang the blood of the martyrs, which became the seed of the church. “THEY overcame through the blood of the Lamb and their testimony, and loved not their lives unto death ;” See Rev. xii. 11.

3. He loves God with all his MIND, *εν ὅλη τη διανοια*, with all his intellect or understanding, who applies himself only to know God and his holy will ; who receives, with submission, gratitude, and pleasure, the sacred truths which he has revealed to man ; who studies neither art nor science, but as far as it is necessary for the service of God, and uses it at all times to promote his glory ; who forms no projects nor designs, but in reference to God and to the interests of mankind ; who banishes as much as possible from his understanding and memory every useless, foolish, or dangerous thought, together with every idea which has any tendency to defile his soul, or turn it for a moment from the centre of eternal repose ; who uses all his abilities, both natural and acquired, to grow in the grace of God, and to perform his will in the most acceptable manner. In a word, he who sees God in all things—thinks of him at all times, having his mind continually fixed upon God—acknowledges him in all his ways—who begins, continues, and



ends all his thoughts, words, and works to the glory of his name—continually planning, scheming, and devising how he may serve God and his generation more effectually ; his head—his intellect, going before ; his heart—his affections and desires, coming after. He is light in the Lord, and he walks as a child of light and of the day, and in him there is no cause of stumbling.

4. He loves God with all his **STRENGTH**, who exerts all the powers and faculties of his body and soul in the service of God ; who, for the glory of his Maker, spares neither labour nor cost ; who sacrifices his body, his health, his time, his ease, for the honour of his divine Master ; who employs in his service all his goods, his talents, his power, his credit, authority, and influence ; doing what he does with a single eye, a loving heart, and with all his might ; in whose conduct is ever seen the work of faith, patience of hope, and labour of love. He never does the work of the Lord slothfully—lives under the influence of the energy of God's Spirit, and from the inward working of God's mighty power, he is ever striving to enter in at the strait gate, brings as many as he can with him, and goes even near, in courage and fervent love, to the brink of the pit, in order to snatch brands out of the burning.

Reader, this is the man that loves God with all his heart, life, understanding, and strength. He himself, by the grace of the Lord Jesus, has been gathered out of the corruption that is in the world—has truly repented of all his sins—been justified freely through the redemption that is in Jesus, and continuing faithful to the grace received, has had the very “thoughts of his heart cleansed by the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit,” so that he has been enabled (as above) “perfectly to love him, and worthily to magnify his holy name.” What he is, he is by the mere mercy and powerful operation of the grace

of Christ; it is by his blood he was justified, and by that he has been sanctified. Satan has been wholly cast out, and all his goods spoiled; and his heart is become a temple of the Holy Ghost. He is in consequence crucified to the world, and the world to him: he lives; yet not he, but Christ lives in him. He beholds as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and is changed into the same image, from glory to glory. Simply and constantly depending on and looking to Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of his faith, he receives continual supplies of enlightening and sanctifying grace, and is thus fitted for every good word and work. O glorious state of him who has given God his whole heart, and in which God ever lives and rules!—glorious state of blessedness upon earth—triumph of the grace of his God over sin and Satan—state of holiness and happiness far beyond this description, which comprises an ineffable union and communion between the ever-blessed TRINITY and the soul of MAN. O God! let thy work appear unto thy servants; and the work of our hands establish upon us; the work of our hands, establish thou it! Amen. Amen.

The law-doctor had asked, “Which is the great commandment in the law?” Our Lord having stated the commandment itself, adds, “This is the first and great commandment.”

There are several particulars which are usually referred to, in order to show that this is the *first* and also the *great* commandment. It is so,—

1. In its ANTIQUITY. It is as old as the creation of man, and was originally written on the human heart. It is natural for every child to love its parents—they are the fountain of its being, and the authors of all its comforts and enjoyments. It is naturally led to them for a supply of all its wants, for its defence against dangers, and for

all the information it needs relative to outward objects, and the relation in which it stands to them. Could any child be more sensible of these things than our first parents, when they came out of the hands of their Maker? They knew him as their Creator; they saw that his bounty had provided for them all the things they needed. They saw him in every way great, and glorious, and good; they felt their relation to him; they loved him with all their powers; their love was pure and holy; and it was not and could not be divided; there was no other object of love; no other claimant of the homage and affections of their hearts. This was therefore the *first* and the *great* commandment. It was the first information they received from God, and the first dictate of their own hearts.

2. It is the first and greatest in DIGNITY. And this is evident, in its directly and immediately proceeding from God, and referring to him. He is its author; and it belongs to that image and likeness of God in which they were created; and it must therefore be the greatest, best, and most useful. He gave it to man in the most perfect state of his being, and the ability to observe it proved the perfection of that being; and it had the most perfect of beings for its object; and that most perfect of beings was pleased with its exercise.

3. In EXCELLENCE. It is the chief of all others, because all others are included in it, and spring from it; and thus exceeds in its excellence, as the cause excels the effect. It excels, as it is the chief command of both covenants; and contains the very spirit of the divine adoption: "We love him, because he first loved us."

4. In JUSTICE. Because it alone renders to God his due: for it prefers him before all things, and secures to him his proper place and rank, in relation to them. Not to prefer him to all the works of his hands, would be

the height of injustice and ingratitude ; to put anything in his place, the grossest idolatry. Being under infinite obligation to God, we owe him the homage of the heart. He is our author, our sovereign, and our preserver. Justice itself says, "Love him in return for his love."

5. It is the first and greatest, in reference to its SUFFICIENCY. It is the fountain whence holiness, contentment, and happiness spring. He that loves God, as has been before described, requires nothing else to make him holy and happy in this life, and happy and glorious in the life to come. He whose heart is filled with the love of God, needs nothing else to make him happy. This alone is sufficient, it is a fulness of sufficiency.

6. In FRUITFULNESS. All obedience to God springs from this ; all benevolence and beneficence have their origin in this also. It is the very root of all the other commandments, and the fulfilling of the divine law. When love to God is the spring of all human actions, how beneficent, how useful to man, how honourable to God, must those actions be !

7. It is the first and greatest in VIRTUE and EFFICACY. Virtue is moral strength : it is mighty in its strength,—it gives life, and form, and effect to all the operations of body and soul. It is not only the cause of obedience, but the powerful incentive to all duty. The love of Christ, says the apostle (2 Cor. v. 14), constraineth us. It excites to, drives on, and gives energy in, every pious, religious, and benevolent act. By it alone God reigns in the heart ; and by it the human soul is united to God.

8. In EXTENT. It takes in God, and all his attributes ; each of his attributes is an object of this love. It takes in all the works of his hands,—it admires and prizes them, because made and sustained by him who is its supreme enjoyment ; it extends to every human being,—it is concerned for every fallen human spirit,—it loves them

with a measure of that love which caused Christ to become incarnate, and to pour out his life unto death for their salvation. It is the source of philanthropy and generous feeling,—“it spreads itself abroad through all the public, and feels for every member of the land.” It extends to the lower parts of the animate creation ; torture, cruelty, unkindness, and harsh usage never existed in its sphere. It is the origin of all benevolent institutions ; and from it the social principle has its origin. And as itself springs from God, so it refers all that is good, wise, excellent, and useful in the creature, to that fountain of ineffable goodness.

9. In NECESSITY. God made man for happiness ; this love is the sole cause of happiness ; where this love is not, there is—there can be, no happiness. The whole earth would be a howling wilderness without it ; man would exist in the most wretched degree of misery ; all the lower animals dependant upon him would partake in his misery ; he himself would be next to Satan in hopeless wretchedness. Destitute of that love here commanded, he would be filled with hate, its opposite ; for what love fills not in the human intellect hatred and enmity will. Without this, what would human life be ? Man would say in overwhelming trials, “I hate it ; I will not live always ; strangling is better than life !” Is not its absence the sole cause of all suicides, and indeed of the general sum of human misery ? It is, therefore, absolutely and indispensably NECESSARY. Without it, what would angels be ?—FIENDS ; what would men be ?—BRUTES and DEMONS !

10. It is the first and greatest commandment in DURATION. The apostle has decided this point, 1 Cor. xiii. 13 : “And now abideth faith, hope, love ; but the GREATEST of these is LOVE.” It must be continued through the whole duration of time ; and will not be

discontinued throughout eternity. Men live on it, angels live by it. To make earth habitable, and heaven glorious, the love that God commands must endure for ever. Without it, the race of man would not be continued on the earth; and without it, the happiness of heaven would have an end. For all the above reasons, hear, O man! “THOU shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength. THIS is the FIRST and GREAT commandment.”

Having proceeded thus far, our Lord, the Fountain of love and goodness, takes occasion to give this teacher of the law a lesson, which, though contained in the old law, was not acknowledged in practice by even the scribes and Pharisees: therefore he adds,

“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” This same commandment is found Lev. xix. 18: “Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.” But the Jews, in our Lord’s time, had rendered this commandment of none effect; they restrained the meaning of neighbour to those of their own kindred, and all others they considered as enemies; and thus they quoted this law, as our Lord testifies: “Ye have heard that it has been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.” See Matt. v. 43, 44.

The word *neighbour* (in Greek, πλησιον) signifies one that dwells near to us, from *nae* or *naer*, near, and *buer*, to dwell; and is well translated in the Anglo-Saxon, *nehrtan*,—him that is *next* to you; or from *naep*, *near*, and *rtandan*, to stand,—he that *stands near you*. And our Lord shows that the acts of kindness are to be done to any person in

distress, of whatever nation, religion, or kindred he may be ; and this kindness should be done to him that is near us, either in person, or in proxy, or by report. For a man may be near us personally,—near us by his representative, or near us, brought into our presence, by credible report ; so that any human being may be that neighbour to whom we should do kindness, when once his case and necessity is known ; for he is with us, just before us, in the trust-worthy report we have received. If a man come from the most distant part of the earth, the moment he is near you he has the same claim on your mercy and kindness, that you would have on his were your dwelling-place transferred to his native country. And if he be not personally near you, the true representation of his necessitous case, when once brought before you, places him in effect there ; and his claims on you are as strong as if he were personally present. It is on this very principle that the New Zealanders, our antipodes, may be our neighbours, when we hear of their dark and dismal state, totally without God, and without any moral good ; and it is on this same principle that we love them so much, as to contribute to the best of our power to send them the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

This second commandment tells us that we should love our neighbour, thus understood, as ourselves. As this second commandment is like unto the first, we see that the love of our neighbour springs from the love of God as its source ; is found in the love of God as its principle, pattern, and end ; and the love of God is found in the love of our neighbour as its effect, representation, and infallible mark. See some observations on this subject in the discourse on Eph. iii. 14—21, in Vol. I.

This love of our neighbour is a love of equity, charity, succour, and benevolence. We owe to him what we have a right to expect from him. “ Do unto all men as

you would they should do unto you," is a positive command of our Lord. By this rule, we should think, speak, and write about every soul of man with whom we are concerned; put the best construction upon all the words and actions of our neighbours that they can possibly bear. By this rule, we are taught to bear with, love, and forgive him, if he have even been troublesome, or have done us wrong. We should rejoice in his happiness, mourn in his adversity; desire and delight in his prosperity, and promote it to the best of our power; instruct his ignorance, help his weakness, and risk even our life for his sake and the public good. The Jews thought that all these things should be done to an Israelite; that is the sense in which they understood the word neighbour. Hear one of their wisest and most learned men, Rabbi Maimon: "A Jew sees a Gentile fall into the sea; let him by no means lift him out: for it is written, 'Thou shalt not rise up against the blood of thy NEIGHBOUR.' But this is not thy neighbour." By this wretched construction of the word, a Jew is bound to suffer a Gentile to perish if he see him in danger of death, though he could easily prevent this! But we, thank God! have not so learned Christ. In a word, we must do everything in our power, and in all and through all the possible varieties of circumstances, for our neighbours, which we would wish them to do for us, were our situations reversed. This, Jesus has taught. O how far is Jesus and his gospel above even Moses and his law!

How happy would society be were this sacred and rational precept properly observed! Reader, if others do not attend to it, it is not the less binding on thee. To him who loves God with all his heart, the fulfilment of this duty is not only possible, but easy and delightful. The carnal mind is enmity against God, and to it every sacred duty is irksome, and every heavenly virtue hate-



ful ; but when the heart is renewed in righteousness and true holiness, submission to God is its element, and obedience its delight. And with respect to our neighbour, let us ever remember, that the man who would deprive another of any temporal or spiritual privilege, which he requires that man to concede to him, is a bad member of civil and religious society, and is destitute of the love both of God and man.

Our Lord gives us the rule and measure of this love, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour *as thyself*.”

Self-love, as it has been generally termed, has been grievously decried and declaimed against, even by religious people, as a most pernicious and dreadful evil. But charity would say, it is to be hoped they have not understood the subject on which they spoke. They have denominated that intense propensity which unregenerate men feel to gratify their carnal appetites and vicious passions, self-love ; whereas it might more properly be termed self-hatred or self-murder. If I am to love my neighbour as myself, and this love worketh no ill to its neighbour, then self-love, in the sense in which our Lord uses it, is something excellent. It is properly a disposition essential to our nature, and inseparable from our being ; by which we desire to be happy, and by which we seek the happiness we have not, and rejoice in it when we possess it. In a word, it is “the uniform wish of the soul to avoid all evil, and enjoy all good.” Therefore he who is wholly governed by self-love, properly and scripturally speaking, will devote his whole soul to God ; and earnestly and constantly seek all his peace, happiness, and salvation in him alone.

But self-love cannot make me happy ; I am only the subject that receives the happiness, but am not the object that constitutes that happiness ; for it is that object, properly speaking, that I love ; and love, not only for its

own sake, but also for the sake of the happiness which I enjoy through it. No man, says the apostle, ever hated his own flesh ; but he that sinneth against God wrongeth his own soul, depriving it of present and eternal salvation ; and is so far from being governed by self-love, that he is an implacable enemy to his own best and dearest interests in both worlds.

We may, if we please, call that self-love which causes us to have only our own interest in view ; and that man a self-lover, who cares for nobody, helps nobody, pities nobody ; who is the centre of his own paltry system, and extending his arms to every part of his circumference, rakes everything into the vortex of himself. Of the widow's moans, and the cries of the orphan, he is utterly regardless ; he gets all he can—saves all he can—and keeps all he gets ; and cares not who wants, or who is in misery. I cannot call this man's principle self-love—he has no love for himself ; as he feels no good, he does no good ; and as he does no act of kindness, he cannot have even the happiness of a dog, for a dog is pleased when he finds he has pleased his master. He is one who in his heart and conduct is abhorred of God, and despised by all men. Pray for him, but have no connexion with him : there are not many of his kind on the earth, bad as it is. O, pray God that he may never have his fellow.

One word more on this general subject. When God says, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as *thyself*,—he does not say, Thou shalt love him *better than thyself*. My love to him should cause me to divide my last morsel with him ; but should I give him the whole, when I had no prospect of any supply ? It would be an unnatural act—this would be loving him *better than myself*, which would be as opposite to *law* as to *nature*.

Reader, review the whole of this love to God and man, its nature and its effects, adore God for his good-

ness in giving thee such a law. This is the religion of Jesus! Love ME, and love thy FELLOWS. Be unutterably happy in me ; and be in perfect peace, unanimity, and love among yourselves! Great Fountain and Dispenser of love! fill thy creation with this sacred principle, for his sake who died for the salvation of a lost world! Amen.

To give due weight and importance to these commands, our Lord sums up the whole with this strong assertion, viz.,

“On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

These two commandments are like the first and last links of a chain,—all the intermediate depend on them. True Religion begins and ends in the love of God and man. These are the two grand links that unite God to man, man to his fellows, and men again to God.

St. Paul says, Rom. xiii. 10, “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour ; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” He who has the love of God and man in his heart can do no evil to any creature. He cannot avenge himself on his greatest enemy, much less can he injure or kill a man who has never done him ill. On the other hand, if he love him, and love him as himself, he will do him any kindness in his power. Disobedience to God arises from the carnal mind, which is enmity to God ; but when the heart is filled with love to God, and the carnal mind is destroyed, then the enmity is destroyed, and obedience is delightful. He cannot be an enemy in his mind to God, by wicked works, who has the mind in him which was in Christ ; and to such a mind the “commandments of the Lord are not grievous.” Now, all our duties in life refer either to God, or to man, or to both ; there is no third party to which we are accountable, or to whom we owe obedience : having therefore

the principle of attachment and obedience to God, and of fraternal affection and kind offices to man (and the whole of God's word, whether law, prophets, psalms, gospels, or epistles, refers all our actions to God and man), therefore the love that fulfils all the commands relative to both must be the fulfilling of the law; and thus "on these two great commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

On another occasion, mentioned by St. Luke, x. 25, &c., a lawyer having asked our Lord, "What he should do to inherit eternal life?" when asked by the Divine Teacher what was written in the law on this subject, and answering in the words of these two commandments, our Lord replied, "Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live," ver. 28. We may observe that the life which the Saviour of man promises may be considered as the necessary consequence and the gracious recompence of this love to God and man.

He whose soul rests in God, supremely and intensely satisfied, who always lives to and ever acts for God, must be happy. God, the author and fountain of life and felicity, lives in him; he lives therefore a spiritual life, which consists in the union of God and the soul, as animal life consists in the union of the soul and its body. The works of righteousness which he performs are at once the evidences and the functions of this spiritual life. He lives to all the important purposes and concerns of life, viz., to glorify his God, and to do good to man. He lives under the influences of the life-giving Spirit, and increases daily in love both to God and man. The life of the wicked may be justly termed an ever-living death; but the life of the righteous is an ever-living life. He lives in death itself! Death is his; it is the gate of eternal life to his deathless spirit. He shall never die; and he lives where there is no death; he

lives through eternity. He lives in him who only hath immortality ; and him he sees as he is. Penetrated with the rays of his glory, he contemplates his infinite perfections, each of which must beget in him endless wonder, delight, and satisfaction. Behold, therefore, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God ! Father of mercies ! God of light, power, and love ! illuminate, quicken, and invigorate the minds of thy people ; let them see the glorious hope of their calling, and never rest,

Till, transformed by faith divine,  
They gain that perfect love unknown ;  
Bright in all thine image shine,  
By putting on thy Son.

These are things which the angels desire to look into ; how then should men feel !

The pious Quesnel says, on the text of this discourse, “This double precept, concerning the love of God and of our neighbour, is the summary of all the divine and positive commandments ; the compendious direction and way to salvation ; the Bible of the simple and ignorant ; and the book which even the most learned will never thoroughly understand in this life.”

How much need have we to pray to God that he may open our eyes, that we may see wonders in his law ; and open our hearts, that we may feel his glorious power rooting out the seeds of sin ! With such glorious privileges before us, and within our reach, why should we live in a state of spiritual nonage ? Shall the present generation be minished from the earth, before the enjoyment of this state of grace become general in the Church of Christ ? Are not all things now ready ? Has not the blood of the covenant been shed to justify the ungodly, and sanctify the unholy ; and can it ever be more efficacious in its nature than it now is ? Does not God now

wait to be gracious? Can he ever be more willing to cleanse our hearts from all unrighteousness than he is now? Does he not make it our duty to love him this moment with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength? And does he not know that we cannot thus love him till he has cleansed our hearts from all unrighteousness? Then he must be this moment willing to cleanse us if he expect a loving obedience from us, which he knows is impossible till he have sprinkled clean water upon us, and made us clean? “The Spirit and the bride say, Come! and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him come, and take the water of life freely!” Where is the Holy Spirit, the purifier? Where is faith to receive him? In the sight of his Omnipotence, can it be impossible? In the sight of his Sacrifice, impracticable? No!

Faith, mighty Faith, the promise sees,  
And looks to that *alone* ;  
Laughs at impossibilities,  
And cries, *It shall be done* !

See the discourse on Eph. iii. 14—21, in Vol. I., where there are several observations on this subject.

## SERMON XXIV

### THE WISE MAN'S COUNSELS TO HIS PUPIL;

OR, THE TRUE METHOD OF GIVING, RECEIVING, AND  
PROFITING BY RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

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PROV. xxii. 17—21.

17. Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise ; and apply thine heart unto my knowledge.
18. For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee ; they shall withal be fitted in thy lips.
19. That thy trust may be in the Lord, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee.
20. Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge,
21. That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth ; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee ?

I SUPPOSE these verses to contain an address of the wise man to one of his pupils, and to refer principally to instructions which this pupil had already received. I think it probable, that what is here said is built on that most important maxim, ver. 6, “Train up a child in the way he should go ; and when he is old he will not depart from it.” A short paraphrase of this verse will serve to show the connexion between it and the teaching in the text. The original of the first clause of this verse is curious and impressive, חנך לער על-פי דרכי *chanac lenaar âl-pi dareco*, “Initiate a child at the opening (mouth) of

his path." When he comes to the opening of the way of life ; when reason begins to dawn, being just able to walk alone, and to choose in a general way between good and evil ; stop at this point of entrance, and begin a series of instructions how he is to conduct himself in every step he takes. Show him the duties, dangers, and blessings of the path ; give him directions how to perform the duties, how to shun the dangers, and how to secure the blessings which all lie before him. Fix these on his mind by daily inculcation, till their impression is become indelible ; then lead him to practice by slow and almost imperceptible degrees, till each indelible impression becomes a strongly radicated habit. Beg incessantly the blessing of God on all this teaching and discipline ; when this is done, you have obeyed the injunction of the wisest of men ; and then you will have strong reason and pointed revelation to support you in the belief that there is no likelihood that such impressions shall ever be defaced, or such habits ever be destroyed. God, who has commanded the duty, will infallibly give his blessing where the work is faithfully performed ; and his seed sown in his own name will bring forth fruit to the glory and praise of his grace.

Still a frequent recurrence to first principles will be necessary,—the pupil must be examined in reference to his progress in religious knowledge and practical piety : he must be reminded of his duty, of the snares of life, and of the use he has made of the instructions he has received. He must be called to the feet of his master,—Come, " bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise !" Is thy talent improved ? What hast thou gained by trading ?

Assuming the same ground as that of Solomon, I will endeavour to copy his example ; and, leaving all proverbs



and initiatory instruction, I shall endeavour to point out,

I. The *directions* how to profit by that which wisdom has already delivered.

II. The *nature* of the instruction, and the pleasure and profit to be derived from it.

III. The *end* for which it was given ; and

IV. Make an appeal to every disciple relative to the matter and importance of the teaching.

V So illustrate and defend the heavenly teaching, that the mind of the disciple may have the fullest satisfaction, and most plenary evidence of the truth of God ; and the importance of that truth.

VI. See the reasonableness of witnessing and faithfully proclaiming what we experimentally know to be of the utmost importance to the welfare of men in general.

I. Solomon addresses his pupil on the profitable use of the lessons which wisdom had already taught.

We might consider the whole subject in these verses as relating only to the wise man and his disciple ; but as we have the highest authority to believe that " whatsoever was written of old time was written for our learning," I shall consider the whole as applicable to the state of religious society at large ; show our advantages, and how we should hear the teachings of wisdom, in order that we may be saved.

1. "Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise."

A wise man addresses us, and the wisdom of God speaks by his mouth. Not only the wise man's words, but his sentiments also, which are those of divine wisdom, should be carefully heard. It would be rude to show

inattention to the friendly address of any man, and especially of one famed for science and piety; and still more so if age and experience had matured his knowledge, and given him a certain right to speak as a master and to teach wisdom even among those that are perfect. But it would be criminal to treat with indifference him who speaks from heaven; who can not only speak to the ear, but to the heart; and thus gives light to apprehend right things, and power to feel and profit by them. Such a teacher is in every religious assembly; and while he diffuses his light to enable us to discern our state in all our want, guilt, and moral disease, his power is present to heal us. Do we really believe that saying, "Where-soever two or three are gathered together in my name, I am in the midst of them;" and that he who is thus present is the Fountain of wisdom and mercy; without feeling the utmost certainty of the infallibility of his teaching, and at the same time his great readiness to impart the instruction we need? Man may even undesignedly mislead us. God can neither deceive, nor be deceived. The advantage of having such a teacher is ineffably great.

2. He teaches knowledge. He gives doctrines, not only true in themselves, but such as are confirmed by observation and experience. Whosoever has learned of him has become wise unto salvation; and not one soul that has followed his directions has ever miscarried. Is not this consideration sufficient to induce us to come into his presence with thanksgiving, knowing that we are not only going to hear the words of Moses, the prophets, the evangelists, and the apostles, but the word of HIM by whom, as well as of whom, Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write.

On this consideration, will not your hearts say, **Speak, Lord!** thy servants wait to hear. He who is the sum and

substance of their teaching condescends to become, by the direct influence of his Spirit upon the heart, our immediate teacher. What a privilege !

3. Seeing we have such a teacher, should we not hear him with deep humility and attention ? This is stated by the wise man in the text : “ Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise.” Can we for a moment suppose that we are worthy of such a privilege ? Did we ever, or can we ever, deserve it ? Have we not sinned against him, and is not our mental darkness an effect of our sin ? Deeply humbled should we be in the presence of our Judge ; nor can that humiliation be lessened by the consideration that mercy rejoices over judgment, and to it our obligations are about to be transferred ? No—to eternity it must be a subject of humiliation, that so great was our offence, and so deep was our stain, that they required the humiliation of the Creator of the heavens and the earth to atone for the offence and wash out the stain : for he humbled himself—made himself of no reputation—took upon him the form of a servant—was made in the likeness of man—became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross !

And all this was absolutely necessary, in order that he might become our teacher, and pour out his soul for transgressors. Bow down thine ear—approach his footstool with the most respectful reverence ; and while his ministers are teaching you out of his law, and encouraging you out of the gospel, listen to hear his voice in your heart, accrediting the words of his servants, and sealing instruction upon your souls. He takes away the veil—diffuses light, and then you will see wonders in his law. But let it be remembered, that no word of God was ever read or heard profitably, where the spirit of humility did not bear rule.

4. The words of the wise must not only be humbly

and respectfully heard, but they must be pondered, i. e. well weighed, and be the subject of careful meditation. Hence the text says, “Apply thine heart unto all knowledge;”—put thy heart to this knowledge—let it and thy heart meet; let them meet as teacher and pupil, the one ready to give all instruction, and the other to receive it. And remember that you are to meditate on the lessons of wisdom in order to get practical knowledge—knowledge by which you may act, till you know the truth of God experimentally and savingly.

Under the first particular, I have considered knowledge as implying doctrine. Now if good and sound doctrine be not fully understood, it cannot be experienced; and if not experienced, it cannot be practised; and if not brought into practice, it can be of no use. Hence experimental practical religion must be that which the wise man calls “his knowledge;” and this is evident—

II. From the comfort or happiness which this knowledge brings, “For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee,” ver. 18.

1. Thus we see that the words of the wise and his knowledge must be kept within,—in the mind, by recollection and reflection; and in the heart, by experimental spiritual feeling.

2. There is both pleasure and profit to be derived from attentive hearing; and the words of life must be laid up in the heart—they are a spiritual treasure, and must be treasured there.

3. Throughout all the walk and business of life, the words of God bring satisfaction to the mind, comfort to the heart, and sure direction to the steps. These are no mean encouragements; and in hearing the words of life, we should keep all these things in view.

4. The man who thus attends to the teachings of wisdom, shall gain such an experimental knowledge of them

as to be able to speak of them suitably, pertinently, and persuasively. "They shall withal be fitted to thy lips," *ib.* A man who pretends to religion, and has no experimental knowledge of it, soon exposes himself. The words of it are not at all fitted in his lips. He knows not the principles of the language of Canaan—its grammar he has never learned—and to pretend to speak it, shows not only his own ignorance, but also his hypocrisy and folly. He can neither suit the Scriptures to his own state, nor to that of others. He cannot speak pertinently on cases of conscience, subtle temptation, or plausible objections. He can have no power of persuasion, because he has no experience of the truth. He is not converted, and neither knows the Bible, himself, nor his Saviour.

In order that the words of the Most High may be pleasant to a man, he must keep them within him, *בבטן be-bitonca*, "in thy bowels," the whole *viscera*, which perform the essential vital functions, must feel their influence. The heart must beat for God, the lungs breathe for him, the stomach and bowels perform their respective functions, that, the whole system being in a healthy state, there may be an increase and preservation of strength and energy to be employed in the service of God. And even where there is not a good state of health, it is truly wonderful how much suffering is relieved, and how much weakness is supported, by the truly healing influence of the life of God in the soul of man. It is no wonder the words of God are not fitted to the lips of that man into whose vitals they have never been received.

III. Let us now see the end which the wise man has in view, and after him the ministers of the divine word, by giving these instructions, ver. 19, "That thy trust be in the Lord, I have made known to thee this day."

1. To know, feel, and acknowledge that God is the Fountain of all good and perfection ; that without him

nothing is wise, nothing holy, nothing strong, is a matter of the utmost importance in religion. With him we must begin, with him we must end. As he is the dispenser of all blessings, so he is their preserver: the prayer of faith receives the necessary blessings, and they are preserved and increased by continual dependance on him. Therefore the wise man, and every man who is instructed in the word and doctrine, will propose this grand end in all their teachings, "That thy trust may be in the Lord, I have spoken unto thee this day; even to thee."

2. He who trusts in his own heart is a fool; and cursed is the man who trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm. In most cases, even our veriest friends cannot help us; and our own strength and wisdom we often find to be inefficient and of little worth. Our spiritual enemies are wise, subtle, strong, and experienced; they are also innumerable. They have every advantage against us, even considered as outward assailants; but when we consider that they have a most faithful and powerful party within us, the weakest of which is stronger than ourselves, what hope is there of our escape? None. But in the midst of despair we hear that word, "Trust in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." And in the text we are told to put our trust in the Lord; and that it is one grand design of the public ministry of his word, to excite men to put their trust in the Omnipotent.

3. And that such exhortations may be effectual, they are specific and particular: "I have made known to thee this day, even to thee." Every individual is addressed; every person is specified:—*to thee*, who art nearly overwhelmed with despair, from a sense of thy own worthlessness and weakness—*to thee* is the word of this salvation sent. Even a more wretched object than the above

appears to be singled out. May *I* hope? May *I* trust in God? Is there salvation for me?—*me*, the chief of sinners, the worst of backsliders? Yes, even to **THEE**, the Saviour of man comes. He will bless *thee*, by turning thee away from all thine iniquities. He tasted death for every man, and his blood cleanses from all unrighteousness.

4. But when will he show mercy? I answer: He is as specific in respect to the time, as he is to the person: to-day—even now when thou art calling, mourning, yea, almost despairing, he says, “I have made known to thee **THIS DAY**.” Now, he would have thee to put thy trust in him: for this is the accepted time, and this the day of salvation. He has not commanded thee to trust in reference to the morrow, because he has not told thee that thou shalt live another hour. This he has done in times past—“I **HAVE** made known to thee;” thou hast had those calls often, and still I wait to be gracious; and therefore make known to thee this day. The gate of mercy was never closed against the prayer of a penitent; and now the kingdom of heaven is open to all believers.

IV An appeal is made to the person himself, relative to the matter and importance of the teaching.

1. “Have I not written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge?” ver. 20.

Not only general instructions are given in the way of oral exhortation, but excellent things have been penned and sent to mankind. We have, thank God, a written **LAW**, and a written **GOSPEL**; and copies of these have been multiplied by millions, and they have been translated into almost all the languages of the earth, and have been sent to nearly every nation under heaven.

2. The things contained in this revelation are said to be excellent; **שְׁלֵשִׁים** *shalashim*. And what more pure, holy, just, and good, than the law? And what more

heavenly, benevolent, and effectual to the salvation and happiness of men, than the gospel? All these are excellent, and every page is fraught with excellent things.

3. But as the word שְׁלָשִׁים *shalashim* signifies THIRD, THRICE, three times, in three different ways; it has been thought to refer to the three books written by Solomon, for the edification of men: 1. Canticles; 2. Koheleth or Ecclesiastes; and 3. Proverbs; all containing excellent things of their respective kinds.

4. Others, understanding the word to refer to the voice of divine wisdom, suppose that the three grand divisions of the Sacred Oracles are here intended: viz. 1. The Law; 2. The Prophets; and 3. The Hagiographa. The division called the Law, or *Sepher Tora*, contained in the five books of Moses. The Prophets were divided into the *former*, which included Joshua, Judges, the two books of Samuel, and the two books of Kings: the *latter*, which included Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets. The HAGIOGRAPHA, or Kethubim, comprehended the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the two books of Chronicles. In our Lord's time, this division was a little different. He mentions the three divisions, 1. The LAW; 2. The PROPHETS; and 3. The PSALMS; but under the word Psalms, those books which constitute the Hagiographa seem to be intended; though Josephus mentions only the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, and Canticles, under that division which our Lord (apparently after him) calls the Psalms. These three divisions, as they take in the whole of the Old Testament, include all the excellent things of the Jewish dispensation.

5. Others think they have hit the meaning of *shalashim* in the text, by interpreting it of the three grand INTELLECTUAL SCIENCES. 1. Morality, or Ethics; 2. Natural



Philosophy, or Physics; 3. Theology, or the science of divine things as contained in the Scriptures. On all these subjects Solomon wrote; but his books on natural philosophy are lost.

6. To complete conjecture on this *shalashim*, some of the rabbins, and some Christians with them, find in the term the three senses of Scripture;—1. The literal; 2. The figurative; and 3. The allegorical. Here are senses enough out of one poor Hebrew word; and perhaps none of them the true one; for, after all, as we know the term thrice was often used as the term seven—a certain number for an uncertain (see Amos i. 11; 2 Cor. xii. 8); so it may mean here no more than, “I have written to thee often, very oft;” so in Coverdale: and as שלשים *shalashim* is here interpreted excellent things, or princely things, such as become a king to speak, we may apply it to the Scriptures, and the excellent doctrines they contain. Indeed it would not be difficult to prove that there is not one important art or science which is not alluded to in the Holy Scriptures, and used there to illustrate and inculcate heavenly truths.

7. We find that these excellent, princely, or threefold teachings consist of two grand parts:—1. COUNSELS—מוֹעֲצוֹת *moetsoth*, from יָעַץ *yaáts*, to give advice, counsel, or information. These counsels show men what they should know; advise them what they should do. 2. KNOWLEDGE, דַּאָּת *daáth*, from יָדָע *yadá*, to perceive, or feel by means of the senses, and internal perception; what should be felt, experienced, known to be true, by mental perception. Therefore knowledge here may signify all that influences the heart and affections, and, in a divine sense, experimental religion. In these few points, everything of importance to man is included. 1. To be taught what we should know. 2. To be advised what we should do. And 3. To be put in possession of the spirit of true re-

ligion, and thus experimentally know what we should feel—to have that mind in us that was in Christ Jesus ; harmony of all the affections, regulation of all the passions—in a word, genuine, solid, unruffled happiness, or that religion thus described by the poet :—

“ Mild, sweet, serene, and gentle was her mood ;  
Not grave with sternness, nor with lightness free ;  
Against example, resolutely good ;  
Fervent in zeal, and warm in charity.”

For more on knowledge or experimental religion, see under first head.

V. All this is done to give men the fullest satisfaction and most plenary evidence concerning the TRUTH of God, “That I might make thee to know the certainty of the words of truth,” ver. 21.

1. The words of truth are, *Divine Revelation*, or the doctrines of truth. 1. Doctrines that are true in themselves. 2. That came not from man, nor from uncertain tradition ; but from the GOD of TRUTH. And 3. Are fulfilled, and are fulfilling ; and are thus known and felt to be truth, by all that believe.

2. These *words or doctrines of truth* are here said to be *certain*, קֶשֶׁת *kosheth*, another word for *truth* itself ; they are *the truth of truth*—a most singular mode of explanation—illustrating a thing by *itself*. There is nothing that can be compared with truth. TRUTH is that which is the absolute opposite to all falsity, lie, semblance, deceit, feigning or fiction, counterfeit, imposture, hypocrisy, and everything that is contrary to the “strict conformity of actions to things—of words to thoughts.” It is what is *absolutely right*, as opposed to what is *absolutely wrong* ; and, it might be added, it is what is only *good*, as opposed to what is totally *evil*. Even types, representatives, metaphors, and symbols are considered

as falsehood, when compared with truth ; witness that remarkable saying of the evangelist : "The *law* was given by Moses ; but grace and *truth* came by Jesus Christ," John i. 17.

3. Most words which express or point out things of importance have *synonimes* or substitutes, by which the same ideas may be expressed ; and we can often say such word is the same as such another word ;—*strong* the same as *able* ; *next* the same as *nearest*, &c. But we cannot say, "*Truth* the same as," for there is no *synonime*. We may indeed say, is "the same as verity ;" but this is saying nothing, as it only gives a Latinized translation of the English term.

4. Truth, therefore, has no compeer ; it is an essential attribute of God. He is *the truth* ; the *whole truth* ; and *nothing but the truth* (and so in his word). Producing *existence*, where there was none before, is the *work* of truth. *Essence*, whether of spirit or matter, is the effect of truth. Ideas themselves are not truths, but the semblances of entities ; and even some entities, so called, may be fictitious, and perfectly unreal. Can a man take up the idea of a stone, and throw it at the idea of a lion ? But a stone is a true thing, so is a lion ; i. e., such things have positive, substantial existence.

5. Now *God* is truth. His is a *true Being*. He is infinite, eternal, self-existent, and independent ; there cannot be a second such ; and hence he cannot be compared ; for there is nothing, there *can be* nothing, like to him. Infinite, eternal, self-existent, and independent, can be spoken of no other being. But all these attributes are true of him. He, then, is the only Creator ; whatever exists, exists by and through him. Whatever he does is true ; it has a true existence ; it is not shadow or unreal idea. Whatever he says is true ; it is said, and must stand ; it is commanded, and must stand fast.

6. *Revelation* can come only from him ; for there is no other source of *knowledge*. And his revelation is distinguished from all other professed or pretended revelations, by its *truth*, manifested in the accomplishment of predictions, and the fulfilment of promises. Pretended revelations, or such as false prophets and impostors bring forward to deceive men, for the gain, honour, or power which the framers expect, should they succeed, take care not to deal in promises of supernatural good ; as they well know that they have neither supernatural powers, nor can avail themselves of supernatural agencies. All spiritual blessings and unalloyed happiness are referred by them, not to a temporal futurity, but to an interminable eternity. But the revelation that is true (and to be true, it must come from Him who is true, and who is the Fountain of knowledge) abounds in promises, not merely in reference to an eternal state, but for every fugitive moment of time. We have in his revelation exceeding great and precious promises ; these promises relate to every human being, in every point of its duration ; faith apprehends them, and the true believer feels them to be yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Thus, according to his truth, God is every moment convincing, converting, justifying, sanctifying, sustaining, or delivering some human being or beings ; and thus religion is maintained in the earth ; and as no sword is used, no secular advantages held out, to induce men to espouse and profess his religion, hence his operations are known to be spiritual, and are proved to be true, because they are seen to be real.

7. His revelation is called the *truth* ; and in that revelation he is often called the *true* God. When his ancient people became idolaters, they were said to be *without* the *true* God, 2 Chron. xv. 3. Jeremiah calls him the *true* God, the *living* God, chap. x. 10. And

our Lord tells us that it is everlasting life to know him who is the *true* God," John xvii. 3. And when the people at Thessalonica embraced the gospel of Christ, they are said by St. Paul to have "turned from idols to serve the *living* and *true* God," 1 Thess. i. 9. And St. John assures us, that it was to reveal this *true* God that Jesus Christ came into the world: "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is *true*; and we are in Him who is *true*, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the *true* God and eternal life," 1 John v. 20. And of his revelation, which is called *the truth*, it is said, that it "endureth to all generations," Ps. c. 5, cxvii. 2. That it shall act, in reference to all believers, as a continual defence: "His *truth* shall be thy shield and buckler," Ps. xci. 4; for God's *law* is the truth, Ps. cxix. 142. And the *Holy Scripture* is said to be "the Scripture of *truth*," Dan. x. 21. And St. John asserts that the Spirit of God, by which this revelation was given, is "the Spirit of truth," or *το Πνευμα της αληθειας*, "The Spirit of the *truth*," whose office it was to lead the minds of the evangelists *εις πασαν την αληθειαν*, into the whole of the *truth*, which they were to testify to others concerning Jesus the Christ, and the redemption that is in him, John xvi. 13. And the way in which God will have all men to be saved is by bringing "them to the knowledge of the *truth*," 1 Tim. ii. 4; that is, to send them his revelation, to teach them what they should know and believe; what they should do; what they should here receive; and what they are to expect in an eternal state.

8. These words of truth are *certain*,—the *truth*, springing from the TRUTH. They are not of dubious or difficult interpretation; they point directly to the great end for which God gave them; they promise, and they are fulfilled. He that pleads them by faith, receives

their accomplishment in the spirit and power of divine love. For the Scriptures, the words of truth, as far as they concern the salvation of the soul, are to be experimentally understood; and by this experimental knowledge, every believer has the witness in himself, and knows the certainty of the words of *truth*.

VI. From all the above considerations, we may see the reasonableness of witnessing and faithfully proclaiming what we experimentally know to be of the utmost importance to the welfare of men in general.

“That thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee.”

1. What is meant by the *words of truth*, see under the preceding head.

When the doctrine of salvation by Christ is distinctly and faithfully preached, it will excite much discussion; and there will be many inquirers, What is this doctrine? Have any persons received the blessings we now hear of, viz., the remission of sins, the witness of the Spirit, the full purification of the heart? Are there any persons among our acquaintance, on whose word we can rely, who can conscientiously assert that they have a direct witness, not only from the words of truth, but from the Divine Spirit, in their consciences; that they know and feel that God, for Christ's sake, has blotted out all their sins? Are there any who were well known before as hasty, headstrong, proud, peevish, censorious, envious, passionate men or women, who are become mild, meek, easy to be persuaded, humble, contented, gentle, benevolent, merciful to the persons, property, and characters of their neighbours, and of society in general; who have got that love, that Christian charity, that suffers long, and is kind—that envies not—that is not puffed up—that does not behave itself unseemly—that is not provoked—that thinks no evil—that bears, believes, and

hopes all things? That when reviled, revile not again—that when cursed, bless—when defamed, entreat; who are, in a word, living to the glory of God, and striving to promote the welfare of men? “Where are such? What are the collateral arguments by which you prove that God has done these things for those persons? Can you show us that you and they have not misapprehended the meaning of the Scriptures you quote?”

2. Inquiries of this kind should meet with the speediest, the mildest, and most distinct answers; and the doctrine of truth should be illustrated and supported by the words of truth. St. Peter, 1 Epist. iii. 15, gives some important advice on this head: “Be ready,” says he, “always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” Do not permit your readiness to answer, nor the confidence you have in the goodness of your cause, to lead you to answer pertly or superciliously to any person; defend the truth with all possible gentleness and fear, lest, while you are doing it, you should forget his presence whose cause you support; or say aught that is unbecoming the dignity and holiness of the religion you have espoused; or is inconsistent with that heavenly temper which the indwelling spirit of your meek and lowly Saviour must infallibly produce.

3. Let all those who believe these great truths, and maintain them in their conversation with religious people, or with cavillers, take good heed that those sacred doctrines be not blasphemed, through the unsteadiness of their conduct, or the improper government of their spirits. They, above all others, who make such professions, should be careful to maintain good works, and in all things to manifest a right spirit, lest they should be a stumbling-block to the weak.

I shall now, as a curiosity, put down these verses as

they exist in the first translation of the Bible into English, about A. D. 1350.

*My sone bowe in thin eer, and heere the wordis of wise men. Leye to forsoth herte to my doctrine, the whiche fair schal ben to thee whenn thou kepist it in thi wombe; and schal rebounden in thi lippis, that in the Lord be thi trost. Wherfor and I schal schewen thee it to day. Also I have discribete it thre wise in thoughtis and kunnynge; that I schulde schewen to thee stedfastnesse, and fair spechis of trewth thou schuldist answeren of these thingis to hem that senten thee.*

COVERDALE'S Version, 1535, the first printed edition :

*"My sonne bowe downe thine eare, and herken unto the wordes of wyssdome, applye thi mynde unto my doctrine: for it is a pleasaunt thinge yf thou kepe it in thine herte, and practise it in thi mouth: that thou mayest alwaye put thi trust in the Lorde. Have not I warned thee very oft with counsell and lerninge? that I might schewe thee the treuth, and that thou with the verite mightest answer them that laye eny thinge against thee."*

1. From this important passage we learn, that God in his mercy has given a revelation of his will to man, every way calculated to make him wise, holy, and useful.

2. That this revelation is the truth, and the full truth, on all the subjects which it embraces; and contains in itself the full evidence of its authenticity; and to all that receive it, it is the power of God to salvation.

3. That this revelation contains a vast variety of promises, suited to all circumstances of life, and to every state in which the human being can possibly be found.

4. That the great majority of those promises are for the present life; and divine truth is pledged, that all these promises shall be fulfilled to them who by faith and prayer seek their accomplishment from God.

5. That this fulfilment is a standing evidence of the



truth of this revelation ; for every one who asks, receives—who seeks, finds—and to him who knocks, the gate of mercy is infallibly opened.

6. Experimental religion is founded upon such promises ; all believers have practical proof that his word is true from beginning to end. And this shows that religion is still the same, and that the privileges of true believers in the present day are equal to those which were the inheritance of the true church in those days when prophets and seers proclaimed the righteousness of the Lord ; and apostles and evangelists showed forth the unsearchable riches of the gospel of Christ.

7. That it is the high duty and privilege of every man to hear the doctrine of truth and life, to whom God sends it.

8. That no man can profit by it, who does not hear in the spirit of humility ; willingly renouncing his own wisdom, that he may receive that which is from above ; and his own fancied righteousness, that he may receive that which is by the inspiration of God's Spirit ; that holiness without which none can see God—the true righteousness, that is by faith through Christ Jesus.

9. That there is no state of grace into which we can be brought that can make us independent of God, the Fountain of light and life ; for the Holy Scripture speaks to each, that his trust may be in God ; and the more we know of him, and the more we are united to him, the more we shall feel our dependance upon him. When Adam ceased to feel and acknowledge his dependance on God, he lost his holiness and happiness. Man is not saved but in being brought back to his original state of dependance upon his Maker.

10. That it is the privilege of every Christian believer to have a certainty of the state of grace in which he

stands ; to know that God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven him all his sins ; the Holy Spirit bearing witness with his spirit, that he is a child of God.

11. That it is the duty of every person to spread as far as he can the words of God, and to inculcate those doctrines by which alone men can be saved. In a word, to show the world, as far as his knowledge, means, and influence can reach, that God is loving to every man—that he hateth nothing that he has made—and that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, has tasted death for every man.

12. That it is the foolishness of folly to pretend to religion, if a man do not support his pretensions by a godly life ; for as true religion has its seat in the heart, it will produce its holy effects in the life. And it is impossible that such a principle can ever lie hid ; for it is the life of God in the soul of man, producing the pure flame of love to God, its Author, and to man, its chief object.

One of our good old Bishops gives much good advice on this subject, in a few words :

1. *Come* to *hear* the word of God.
2. Take heed that you *do hear* when you are *come*.
3. *Remember* what is suited to your state in the word you have heard.
4. Be sure to *practise* what you *remember*.
5. And *continue* in what you *practise* ; thus you shall not receive the grace of God in vain. For if ye be hearers of the word only, and not doers, ye shall deceive your souls.

## SERMON XXV.

### CHRIST CRUCIFIED, A STUMBLING-BLOCK TO THE JEWS, AND FOOLISHNESS TO THE GREEKS.

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1 COR. i. 22—24.

22. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom :  
23. But we preach Christ crucified ; unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness ;  
24. But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

#### ADVERTISEMENT.

THE substance of the following discourse was preached at the opening of a chapel in the country in the year 1825. Not only the substance but the plan is the same ; but several of the points are considerably expanded, as I wished to speak more in detail on subjects of a nature entirely analogous to those in the text, and which I could not well introduce in an occasional sermon. Many attempts have been made to corrupt Christianity ever since its establishment in the world ; and, strange to tell, it was its professed friends that made them. From its enemies it never had anything to fear, whether they employed their pens or their swords as instruments of their enmity. It met all malevolence with the meekness of wisdom ; and all open persecution with a patience ennobled by

fortitude ; and thus it quenched the fire, and blunted the edge of the sword, while the holiness, innocence, and usefulness of the lives of its followers gave it a continual triumph over calumny and malevolence. None but its professed friends could hurt it, and they only in two ways ; either by corrupting the general creed by false doctrines, or impairing and degrading the simple apostolic worship by gaudy rites and useless ceremonies. With false creeds the Christian Church had often to contend ; and with useless and worldly ceremonies it was often encumbered. God, in his mercy, always brought forward means to counteract these corruptions ; and revivals of pure and undefiled religion were his grand instruments ; and these never failed to call back those who were resting on their lees, and sinking into the spirit of the world, to first principles in doctrine and simplicity in worship. From these two causes the pure religion of Christ is now in danger ; and in the house of its friends religion has received some alarming wounds. It is fashionable to split hairs in doctrine, so as to perplex the simplicity of truth ; to bring in strange opinions, which, even allowing them to have the semblance of truth, are but mint and cummin to those weightier matters of the law which they jostle and put aside. The discipline of Christianity has been opposed, and often supplanted, by rites and ceremonies, which were introduced either by superstition or worldly-mindedness. In no age of the world was Christianity more corrupted than in that of the school-men, who were all hair-splitting men ; and the world wondered at their subtlety and dexterous sophistry, till religion itself became evanescent, and the works of Thomas Aquinas were put in place of the Bible. Something like this splendid trifling is now beginning to show itself in the Christian Church. May the spirit of judgment and of burning sit upon and

refine it ! and may it come pure out of the wilderness, having lost nothing but its dross and tin ! Even so, Lord Jesus. Amen, Amen.

The city of Corinth, to whose inhabitants this epistle was directed, was one of the oldest cities of Greece, being founded more than 1500 years before the Christian Era. It was situated on the isthmus which connected Peloponnesus or Achaia, now called the Morea, to the mainland. It had what was called the port Lecheum, in the gulf of Lepanto, on the west ; and Cenchrea in the gulf of Egina, on the east ; by which it commanded the commerce of the Ionian and Egean seas, and consequently all Italy on the one hand, and all the Greek islands on the other. In a word, it embraced the commerce of the whole Mediterranean sea, from the Straits of Gibraltar on the west, to the port of Alexandria on the east ; with all the coast of Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and Asia-Minor.

Being so exceedingly well situated for trade, its riches became immense, and for a time these produced great power and great influence ; but in the end, as is ever the case, riches produced luxury ; luxury, effeminacy ; and this, a general corruption of manners. Sciences, arts, and literature, however, flourished much among its inhabitants, and Cicero termed it the luminary of Greece,—the sun that gave light to all the other states. It was ambitious of power, covetous of wealth, proud of its literature and learned men, vain of its public edifices, emulous of all that was great and splendid among its neighbours ; and to all these qualities it added the most degrading sensuality, and the most extensive, ever known in the world. Public prostitution formed a considerable part of their religion ; they were accustomed in their public prayers to request the gods to multiply their pros-

titutes ; and the temple of Venus in this city, one of the most splendid of its buildings, had no less than 1000 courtezans, who were the means of bringing an immense concourse of strangers to the place. In the midst of all this corruption, neither their literature nor the arts were forgotten ; in these respects the Corinthians were enriched in all utterance and in all knowledge ; in oratory and philosophy ; and although, among all the states of Greece, they were the most likely to have rejected the pure and holy gospel of Jesus Christ ; yet in this city the apostle ventured to proclaim his crucified Master ; and though single against their ocean of learning, and unparalleled sink of pollution, he converted multitudes, and founded here a very eminent and flourishing Church, to which he wrote the two epistles which go under his name, and their address. But so powerful are old deeply rooted propensities, till the heart is entirely purified by the grace of God, that he found it difficult to preserve many of them from lapsing into their former practices, which are pointedly noticed, sharply reprehended, and strongly guarded against in these epistles. The doctrine of Christ crucified finally prevailed over all subtlety and corruption ; and though many Jews continued to blaspheme, and Gentiles to gainsay, the cross of Christ, even at Corinth, became the Christian's glory.

To *whom* he preached, *what* he preached, and *how* he preached at Corinth, the verses just read declare ; and to enter fully into these points, I shall,—

I. Give the history of what is contained in the twenty-second verse.

II. Explain the doctrine specified in the twenty-third verse.

III. Make an application of the whole from what is laid down in the twenty-fourth verse.

I. I shall give the history of what is contained in the twenty-second verse, viz. :

“The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom.”

1st. Here we have two nations of people mentioned ; the Jews, and the Greeks.

2nd. We have their chief moral employment specified : the Jews were requiring signs ; the Gentiles were seeking after wisdom.

1. However divided and subdivided the habitable globe may now be, originally there was no distinction of nations. As all human beings proceeded from one father and mother, there could be no distinction, natural, moral, or civil ; all were one family, children and children's children being ever able to trace themselves up to the parent stock ; and as the Creator had given no distinctive marks to any, so it is evident he designed they should consider themselves as one people, all having the same origin, and all referring themselves and their work to his glory who gave them their being, and appointed them their labour. Had primitive innocence continued, this state would have continued ; for we find that the first divisions and distinctions which obtained, were occasioned by moral differences ; the inhabitants of the world being first distinguished by character,—the religious and the profane ; between those who served God, and those who served him not : the posterity of Cain, and the posterity of Seth. But even this distinction was not decisively prominent till the confusion of the tongues at Babel, in the year of the world 1757 ; for previously to this time all the inhabitants of the earth were of one language, and of one speech ; and they journeyed together ; probably having no variety of customs, and but one mode of worshipping the living

and true God. So much seems pretty evidently intended by the account given Gen. xi. 1, &c. ; and this, in all likelihood, prevailed generally through the whole of what was called the patriarchal age. The patriarchs, whose history is given in the book of Genesis, were of the race of Shem ; as the family of Cain never grew to any great eminence. An evil seed, however, was propagated in the earth, till God purged it by a flood, which left only eight of the primitive inhabitants ; all the rest having fallen victims to this scourge of the Lord.

2. Those moral distinctions in the end led to local differences, and in process of time the earth became divided between those professing the true religion, and idolaters ; and this took place when God brought the descendants of Jacob out of Egypt, and settled them in Canaan ; there they received the law by the ministry of Moses ; and in that place the worship prescribed by God himself was established. The different nations who had previously dwelt in Canaan were all idolaters ; they worshipped the sun, moon, and all the hosts of heaven—both planets and stars ; and particularly the former.

3. The descendants of Jacob, alone, had a divine revelation. These were called Israelites after Jacob, who had been named Israel ; and they also obtained the name of Jews from Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob : this became their national characteristic, and this name they continue to retain.

While they occupied the Promised Land, or land of Canaan, they were the only people on the earth that worshipped the true God. All the others were called *gentes*, the nations, or Gentiles ; and although the twelve Jewish tribes occupied but a portion of land, scarcely so large as England, yet they were considered as dividing the habitable globe with the Gentiles ; and because the Greeks became the most remarkable of all the Gentiles.



for genius, science, learning, and arts ; and by them these acquisitions were spread over many parts of Africa and Asia, and over the whole of Europe ; the term Gentiles was absorbed in them ; and all the dwellers upon earth were spoken of as Jews and Greeks, as the apostle does here ; and these terms expressed all the people of the world, as well those who served God, as those who served him not. And this is the distinction which generally obtains in the New Testament.

4. In ancient times the Gentiles were of little moral note, but they were sufficiently distinguished for their idolatry and wickedness ; having received the gospel of our Lord Jesus, they have now arisen to great eminence ; and the Jews who have rejected it, though they still continue a distinct people, are generally dwindled down to contempt and insignificance. Here we see the truth of the saying of the wise man : “ Righteousness exalteth a nation ; but sin is the reproach of any people.”

5. Perhaps no two people, nationally considered, were ever more proud ; each was lost in its own self-esteem. To the Greek, the Jew was a barbarian ; to the Jew, the Greek was a dog. Both held the other in supreme contempt. The Greeks considered the Jews as worthy of no regard,—as the basest and lowest of the human race ; and the Jews considered them as cast out from the presence and approbation of God, and utterly incapable of salvation ; and hence they hated each other with a perfect hatred. The Greeks or Gentiles converted to God now feel pity for the Jews, and have frequently offered them the mercies they so richly enjoy ; while the Jews, continuing to reject the Gospel, treat the others with contumely and disdain.

6. The Jews and Greeks were as opposite in their moral pursuits as they were in their national prejudices. The latter were in continual pursuit of what they called

*wisdom*, Σοφία, and this was divided into two kinds, Σοφία της φύσεως, the *knowledge of nature*, or what we call natural philosophy; and Σοφία του Θεου, the *wisdom of God*, or rather, as they understood it, that knowledge or learning which treats of spiritual beings, or what we call divinity. Not having an infallible teacher, they had no fixed principles; and as there were many pretenders to wisdom, who went under the name of φιλοσοφοι, *philosophers*, or *lovers of wisdom*, each of whom made the most specious pretensions to the full discovery of truth, and then set up public schools, the whole of Greece was filled with teachers; these often disagreeing, they divided into *sects*, and the people of course were divided into *parties*, each supporting its favourite teacher. These all professed to be in pursuit of the το καλον or το αγαθον, what the Roman philosophers called *summum bonum*, the *supreme good*,—that after which all longed, and that without which all knew they could not be happy. But here again the diversity of sentiments brought about much confusion, there being numerous and discordant opinions among the philosophic sects, concerning that in which the supreme good consisted.

7. A little before the incarnation, this *seeking after wisdom* became fervent and general, and as there was none of sufficient wisdom and authority to say “this is right,” and “this should be the general belief,” a class of learned men arose, who, supposing that truth was certainly to be found among the philosophers, though no one teacher or sect had it all, set themselves to select out of the writings of the Academics and Peripatetics—out of the various sects that sprung from these—the principles of the true philosophy; and these were called the Eclectic sect. But these had no better success than the individuals or sects from whose opinions they formed their selection; all was hypothesis; nothing was proved. Ex-

perimental philosophy did not exist, and all the energies of the mind were spent in speculations ; and he who was most profound, i. e., the most obscure, and consequently the least understood, was considered the ablest philosopher ! The *summum bonum*, or supreme good, in pursuit of which they wasted their oil and spent their days, eluded their research. Their opinions concerning it were endless ; not less than 288, according to Varro and St. Augustine, are collectible from their writings ; and yet only one of these, if the truth were among them, could be true ; and as the supreme good can only come from God, for his favour and a transfusion of his holiness constitute the supreme good of man, consequently not one of those opinions was true, as none of them knew that God from whom alone this divine gift can come.

Cicero, one of the greatest men in the heathen world, scrupled not to say, that “ there is nothing in the world how absurd soever, but has been maintained by one philosopher or other ! ” Indeed they were not agreed even in their definition of true philosophy or wisdom. Epicetetus said it consisted in *three* things : “ 1. The practice of precepts ; 2. The reason of precepts ; and 3. The proof of precepts.” But here the question returns ; What are the *precepts*, the *practice* of which is enjoined by the definition given above, the *reason* of which is required, and the *proof* of which is demanded ? In vain do we talk of practice, reason, and proof, if there be not important principles ; and if there be not a self-evident agreement, fitness, and propriety in the principles, so as to recommend themselves to every man’s conscience, in vain do we ask for practice, reason, and proof. And as it is from truth alone that such principles can be derived, they cannot form right principles who have not the truth. In short, the teaching of philosophy has become a means

of the emolument of the teacher ; and while they boasted to be free, they themselves were the slaves of various evil tempers and passions ; so that it was said, with great propriety, of philosophy or wisdom, in its several stages, Philosophy was impious under Diagoras ; vicious under Epicurus ; hypocritical under Zeno ; impudent under Diogenes ; covetous under Demochares ; voluptuous under Metrodorus ; fantastical under Crates ; scurrilous under Menippus ; licentious under Pyrrho ; quarrelsome under Cleanthes ; and at last, intolerable to all men. Thus, “when the world by wisdom knew not God,” it pleased him, by the foolishness of preaching (of the proclamation of Christ crucified) to save them that believed. Yet the Greeks continued to seek after wisdom.

8. The JEWS, who had received much of their knowledge of God, and the rites and ceremonies of his religion, by the ministry of angels, in which miraculous interferences were frequent, at last would credit nothing relative to God and supernatural things, unless confirmed by a sign, or some supernatural appearance or fact ; hence the saying in the text, “The Jews require a sign,” and “the Greeks seek after wisdom.” Each of these people professed to have in their various pursuits, their perfection and happiness in view, one seeking this in the increase of wisdom, or the discoveries of philosophy ; the other in the increase or multiplication of miracles. These required a sign or miracle to confirm the truth of every oracle delivered by the most accredited prophet ; and at last grew so insolent and unreasonable, as to require miracles to support their credence of things already confirmed by miracle !

9. After all their vain-glorious boasting, each of these people felt the need of something greater and more certain than that which they had already received. The Jews had been led to expect a sovereign ruler, who should

unite supreme power with unerring wisdom—one like to their ancient potentate David ; at once a hero, a legislator, a prudent governor, and a restorer of the purity and efficiency of the divine worship. This long expected person was spoken of among them, by the title *המשיח hamasshiach, the Anointed One*, one who was to be especially sent from God, to be to them as above described. From the writings of Moses and the prophets, they were led to expect this person to come in the power and wisdom of God ; but they expected in him a secular splendour that ill comported with a spiritual ruler, sent immediately from heaven ; and this secular splendour the apostle seems to have immediately in view in his use of the word *σημειον, sign* ; and this was the “sign from heaven” which the Pharisees and Sadducees urged Christ to show them, Matt. xvi. 1 : “Show us, by thy assumption of supreme power, and by thy supernatural influence, that thou art the king sent from God, whom our fathers expected, and in whom alone we can have confidence.” In answer to this, he calls them a “wicked and adulterous generation, who were ever seeking signs,” *σημειον επιζητει*, “seeking sign upon sign ;” but no sign should be given but that of the prophet Jonah ; that is, the passion, crucifixion, and resurrection, which would appear to them as weakness, and utterly inconsistent with the character they conceived of him, should be the grand proofs that he was the person sent from God, who was to give his life for the life of the world ; and instead of conquering by the *sword*—human armies, or condescending to employ twelve legions of angels, he should conquer by the *cross*, to the utter confusion of human pride and vanity ; and thus he would show that his kingdom was not of this world.

10. Nor were the Jews the sole people who about this time were seeking and expecting a supernatural leader

and instructor; the Greeks also had their expectations raised in the same way. From the uncertainty of the opinions of their philosophers, and from some almost prophetic intimations given by Socrates, in his conversation with Alcibiades, as related by Plato, *Alcib.* 2, p. 100, Edit. Bipont.; the Greeks felt the necessity of a teacher that could give them certain information relative to the supreme good; and they were in high pursuit of this wisdom when the apostle wrote. The words of Socrates on this subject are very remarkable; I will give the substance of them for the information of those who may not have the opportunity of consulting the original; they may be found in the conclusion of the dialogue between Socrates and Alcibiades, concerning prayer, called the second Alcibiades.

SOCR. You see therefore, that it is not safe for you to go and pray to God, lest your addresses should happen to be injurious, and God should wholly reject your sacrifice. It is necessary, therefore, that you should delay till you have learned what disposition you ought to be in both towards God and men.

ALCIB. But how long will it be, O Socrates? And who will be this instructor?

SOCR. It is he who careth for you. But as Minerva removed the mists from the eyes of Diomed, that he might distinguish gods from men; so must he first remove from your soul the mists that surround it, and then furnish those helps by which you shall be able to distinguish good from evil.

ALCIB. Let him remove that mist, or whatever else it be, for I shall be always ready to follow his commands, so that I may become a better man.

SOCR. *Αλλα μην κακεινος θαυμαστην οσην περι σε προθυμιαν εχει.* It is wonderful how greatly he is disposed towards the making you such.

These were lights shining in a dark place, all pointing towards Him who is the true light that lighteneth every man coming into the world.

In reference to their moral condition, I have now given—

1. A short history of the nations mentioned—the Jews and the Greeks: 2. Taken notice of their employment in reference to their moral expectations and feelings—“The Jews require a sign—the Greeks seek after wisdom.” The apostle next tells us how he met the requisition of the Jews, and the researches of the Greeks.

II. This will appear from a consideration of the doctrine contained in the 23rd verse, “We preach Christ crucified.”

1. We have already noticed the expectation of the Jews and of the Greeks, of a divine teacher; God, who had excited these expectations, either by his prophetic word, as in the case of the Jews, or by a secret influence in the mind, as in the case of the Greeks and other Gentiles, determined to meet them in such a way as would most effectually satisfy them, and promote his own glory. As man by his wisdom could not find out the cure for his own malady, for this was the invention of God, so the manner or way in which this remedy was to be applied must rest with God alone. As he saves man on his own terms, so he will save him in his own way. Not merely to hide pride from man, but because he could neither find out the thing nor the way; and God chooses the *thing* and the *way*, because nothing less, nothing else than what he provided, could have answered the end. God alone knew best what would answer the purposes of his own justice and mercy—man neither knew the proper nature of God’s justice, the extent of his own misery and helplessness, nor the quantum of mercy necessary to be applied to meet the ends of justice, and to save the de-

linquent into that state of blessedness and perfection as would best accord with his wants and capacities, and the dignity and honour of God himself.

2. The great ruler, lawgiver, and restorer of lapsed human nature, and of the pure worship of Almighty God, expected by the Jews, and the unerring teacher whom the Greeks looked for, as the promulgator of the truth, and settler of all doubts relative to the opinions of the different philosophers, was the seed or offspring of the woman—the Son of a virgin, without the co-operation of man—was he who was intended, and who, in the fulness of time, was manifested in the flesh. He was not only the “Messenger of the great design, *Μεγαλης της βουλης Αγγελος*,” but also that Lamb of God who was to take away the sin of the world; and was, in that counsel or design, slain from the foundation of the world. This person, in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, took part of human nature, that he might be capable of redeeming those whose nature he shared; and there was a congruity, if not a necessity, that the expiation should be made in the nature in which the offence was committed, and the guilt contracted.

3. As sin seems to have entered into the world in the form or spirit of pride and vain-glory, and as contraries are to be counteracted by their contraries, the glorious Redeemer chose to be born of a woman—to take upon him the form of a servant—to humble himself unto death, even the death of the cross. In these things, by the example of his humility, the pride of man is abased and confounded, and the necessity of humiliation of soul, in order to salvation, fully evinced.

4. But it was not merely to teach humility that Christ was made man, and suffered death upon the cross; it was also, and chiefly, to make an atonement for sin. This



was prefigured by the whole of the Jewish ritual, and especially by the whole sacrificial system ; all showing that the death of a human being of infinite dignity was absolutely necessary for the salvation of a lost world. This most glorious person was THE CHRIST—"God manifested in the flesh,"—for that word that was "in the beginning with God," was "made flesh," and "tabernacled among men, full of grace and truth." By this union with man, he, the God-man, Christ Jesus, was a human being of infinite dignity. And the passion and death of this most august Being upon the cross, was the atonement required and appointed, by the order both of the justice and mercy of God, for the redemption of man.

5. The Gentiles had also their *sacrifices* ; for even the common sense of mankind agreed in this, that all men had sinned, and could not make reparation, by any works of righteousness or rites of religion, for their sin ; hence the necessity of an atonement. They all saw that man, in consequence of his sins and sinfulness, was a worthless being ; that he stood in need of innumerable blessings which were totally out of his reach : hence to him a grand sacrifice was requisite, and that sacrifice should be of infinite worth. Thus it could not only atone for sin, but purchase the necessary blessings for them. So universal was the persuasion that a sacrifice was necessary to make atonement for sin, that even the Gentiles were not scandalized at the doctrine of Christ crucified ; it was only at the circumstance of Christ's being crucified as a malefactor ; and the Jews were not stumbled at the doctrine, but at the assertion that Jesus was the Messiah, and that that Messiah was crucified, which they deemed impossible ; as, according to their notions, the Messiah was born to reign, not to suffer and die ; and as they had crucified him through maliciousness, they did not like to

answer to God for the blood of an innocent man; for this the apostles had charged home upon them.

6. It was on this ground that the apostles preached Christ crucified for remission of sin, there being no other way of salvation: all had sinned, and all must finally suffer, and be expelled from God and heaven eternally, or receive the benefit of such a sacrifice as they proclaimed the death of Christ to be. They were most pointed in stating that all who believe in him as being thus sacrificed for them, should be freely justified from all things; and that the salvation of the soul could be secured no other way, either in reference to the Jews or the Greeks. And what was necessary then, is equally so now; for still, there is no entrance to the holiest but by his blood. For his meritorious death, no substitute has ever been found; nor, were the thing possible, will God ever invent a new way of salvation, to accommodate the caprices of Jews or Gentiles; no, nor of those professing Christians who refuse to acknowledge Christ as a sacrifice for sin. This may appear illiberal, but it can only be in appearance; for as this is the doctrine which God teaches, it can neither be illiberal nor improper: and there is no mode of interpretation that can turn away the evidence of those numerous Scriptures which attest that Christ was delivered for our offences, and rose again for our justification, in consequence of which we have redemption in his blood, the remission of sins; and there is no other name given under heaven among men by which we can be saved. Therefore all genuine Christian ministers must continue to preach Christ crucified: and why *crucified*? That he might put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself.

7. How this preaching was received, he next informs us: “It was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness.”

The word *σκανδαλον*, which we translate *stumbling-block*, signifies that bit of wood in a trap called the *key* or *bridge*, on which when the animal treads, the spring is set loose, and it falls into the pit, or is seized by the cheeks or grips of the trap, so that it cannot make its escape ; or is strangled by the grips. It signifies, also, any impediments laid in an open country, where an army, whether of horse or foot, is expected to march, which injure the feet so much, that neither man nor horse can proceed in it. It signifies any impediment by which a person is hindered in his journey ; anything which causes a man to decline from the truth, or from any right way, or to halt in that way, as a man would do who falls over a block in the way, and has his legs so hurt, that he either cannot proceed at all, or only by halt or limping. In short, anything that gives what we call offence, what displeases a person, so that he will go out of the right road, and become the means of inducing others to depart from it also : anything that opposes a man's preconceived opinion, his prejudices, or caprices, so that he will neither believe nor do a thing which it was his duty and interest to perform ; but he obeys his caprices, or follows his prejudices, even to his own hurt. Thus it was with the Jews ; they were carnally minded : they had no notion of a spiritual kingdom, all must be secular and show, in their Messiah ; they could not bear a man, however potent in miracles, &c., if he had not worldly pomp. Such a person was not according to their notions of a Messiah, and to associate with him would be to them scandalous and degrading.

8. The preaching, therefore, of Christ or Messiah crucified, was such a stumbling-block to the Jews. Jesus came, meek, lowly, poor, and mean ; not possessing, and apparently not able to command, any worldly pomp. We have already seen that they expected the Messiah to

come like David in his glory : an all-conquering hero,—a wise legislator,—an able counsellor,—a reformer and supporter of the national religion. But when Christ appeared, though they were astonished at the miracles he wrought, and at the wisdom by which he preached, yet they required a sign—the token of earthly dominion, the assumption of royalty, which they supposed to be essentially requisite to the character of the Messiah : they therefore refused to acknowledge him ; and as they saw no secular power in him, they became inveterate against him ; maligned, persecuted, and at last crucified him : and to vindicate their iniquitous conduct, they continue, by all kinds of blasphemy, to traduce him and his religion to the present day. Thus they have made him a stumbling-block—stumbled over him, fallen, wounded themselves ; and are now no more able to take one step in the way of salvation : and in this wounded condition they have been lying for 1800 years. They are also caught in the trap which they have laid, and into the pit which they have digged for others.

9. The preaching of the cross, or Christ crucified, was foolishness to the Greeks ; and nearly on the same ground that it was a stumbling-block to the Jews. Whatever they might have thought of the person of Christ, and the mighty works which he did, had he lived and preached among them, they despised the doctrine of his apostles, because its sum and substance was,—Christ died for you, and rose again from the dead ; and has commanded, that repentance and remission of sins be preached to all nations (*εις παντα τα εθνη, to all Gentiles*) in his name. They could not see how a man crucified at Jerusalem as a malefactor, could by his death redeem them that lived at Corinth, at Athens, or Ephesus, from sin and all evil, and bring them to a state of endless blessedness ! Besides, the preaching of the

apostles was not with the wisdom of words, ver. 17,—that imposing show of high-sounding, obscure, and many compounded terms, which the Greek poets, philosophers, and orators crowded into their discourses, in order to induce the people to admire them. These the apostles avoided, well knowing that God would destroy the “wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent,” ver. 19, and that he would make foolish the wisdom of this world, ver. 20. Had they come with this mighty pomp of words, and the doctrines of Christianity had been received, men would have thought that this majesty of speech had been the grand converting medium ; and that nothing but human eloquence could be the instrument of converting Jews and Gentiles to the religion of Christ ; but God did his work so that no flesh—no man—could glory in his presence.

10. What incensed the Jews yet more, was the strong assertion of the apostles, that the death inflicted on Jesus Christ made him the grand offering and propitiatory atonement of which their prophets had spoken, and to which all their legal sacrifices bore testimony ; and that from henceforth no offer of salvation could be made to them, nor promise of deliverance from their enemies, but only in the name and for the sake of him whom they had crucified. They still refusing to humble themselves, and to look to him whom they had pierced ; and having finally rejected the Lord that bought them ; wrath came upon their nation to the uttermost ; and their case being hopeless, the apostles left the land of Judea, and turned to the Gentiles ; and while many of the wise and learned rejected the counsel of God against themselves, multitudes of the common people received the apostles’ doctrine, and turned from their idols to the living God ; and hence all the churches mentioned in the New Testa-

ment were formed in the main from converted Greeks. Yet still their philosophers and great men continued seeking after wisdom, despising the simplicity of the preaching of the messengers of Christ; as this seemed foolishness in its matter, and in its manner and language opposite to every notion they had formed of what was dignified and philosophic. Thus, to multitudes the gospel was without effect; through obstinacy and superstition in some, and through pride and vain glory in others. As the Jews saw no secular power nor worldly grandeur; so the Greeks saw no rhetorical nor philosophic eminence in the doctrine of Christ crucified.

But was the word of God without effect? By no means. God says that his word is either a savour of life unto life, or death unto death, to them that hear.

Those who continued to harden their heart against the highest evidence, were hardened by it: those who, in simplicity and godly sincerity, received the truth in the love thereof, were softened, enlightened, instructed, and built up by it. Hence—

III. We are led to consider the application which St. Paul makes of the above doctrine, in the twenty-fourth verse: “But to them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

1. We must first consider here, Who they are who are saved by hearing the gospel? They are, says the apostle, “they who are called,” *αυτοις δε τοις κλητοις*, those who were *invited* to the *marriage-feast*; in a word, all those who had the opportunity of hearing the offers of salvation by the gospel. For the *κλητοι*, *called* or *invited*, not only implies those who heard the call, but them also who received it, and actually came; believed on Christ Jesus, and took upon them the profession of Christianity: it means those also, who not only believed in Christ

and professed his religion, but who looked for and received its saving influence ; by which they knew that *it* was the power of God to their salvation. These blessings were publicly offered to ALL ; both Jews and Gentiles, that is, *all mankind*. The offer freely made to *all*, by divine authority, *all* might embrace : there was no moral hinderance in the way of any man ; and God gave every man a power to accept the invitation he sent. Those who did receive the invitation, received it freely ; as there was no restraint in one case, so there was no constraint in the other. Those who rejected it might have embraced it ; those who embraced it might have rejected it. Those who rejected it rejected their own blessedness ; those who received it received present happiness, and, with it, a right to the tree of life. God has given every man a power to receive his truth, and come unto him. He who does not receive it, and continues in sin, is he who has abused the power ; and for this abuse, and, consequent rejection of the salvation provided for him, he must stand and give an account at the bar of God. And it is because he rejected what he might have received but would not, that he shall hear those awful words, “ Depart from me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for (not you, but) the devil and his angels.” Ye have filled up the measure of your wilful rebellion as they did ; therefore, be partakers of their punishment !

2. What is implied in the gospel being the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

The *δυναμις του Θεου*, *power of God*, often signifies his *miraculous energy* ; as we have seen in other places. And it always means the *potency* of God *in energy* ; not only a *power* to work, but *actual working*. And we learn from this, that the power of God ever accompanies the faithful preaching of his gospel. Where the gospel

is preached, God works. This was contained in the promise, “Lo, I am with you always, to the end of the world :” and as he was the same yesterday that he is to-day, and will be to the end of the world ; therefore, the same effects will be produced by that gospel, wherever it is faithfully preached, and affectionately received. There will be the same or similar conversions, justifications, sanctifications, and faith working by love, that were the fruits of that power of God in the apostolic times. Where these signs follow not public preaching, Christ crucified is not properly or fully preached : for where he is fully and faithfully proclaimed, the mighty energy of God will accompany the preaching ; so that the souls of the people who affectionately hear the call shall become enlightened ; the power of their sins shall be broken ; the might of their enemies crushed ; the guilt of their sins taken away ; their hearts purified ; and on all that glory there will be a powerful defence, preserving them through faith unto salvation : thus they feel Christ crucified to be the power of God. This was the proper miracle ; but this the Jews did not seek.

3. But they find this also to be the wisdom of God. The Greeks sought after wisdom ; but whatever they found, or whatever they preached, had no changing power connected with it. It neither sanctified the philosophers, nor their disciples. The plan was not good,—the teaching was not true. As real wisdom shows the best end, and teaches that it is to be pursued and attained by the use of the best means, and these also it points out ; consequently, the Greeks had not the true wisdom, for they never discovered the best end, nor the way to attain it.

Hence, the apostle says here, “The world by wisdom (its wisdom) knew not God :” therefore, they continued under the power of sin ; and by the teaching of the Gen-



tile philosophers not one soul was saved from its sins. But the Christian believers found Christ crucified to be the wisdom of God, as well as his power. They could see a wonderful consistency in the plan of human redemption, in the mode of its application, in the knowledge which it imparted ; and, as true wisdom is ever seen in discovering the best end, and suggesting the most efficient means for its attainment, they found the doctrine of the apostles led them directly to God, the Supreme Good, through Jesus Christ, the alone available sacrifice ; and the change in their views, hearts, passions, and lives, proved the divinity of the doctrine, and the powerful energy of the agent that applied it.

4. Besides, all that obeyed the call or invitation found not only their minds enlightened, but their hearts ennobled, by it. Earthly things fell in their estimation, and heavenly things rose. They were taught that the animal nature was to be subjected to the rational, and the rational to the Spirit of God. Thus they rose in the scale of their own order of being ; and were taught to answer the end which the wisdom of God proposed when his power brought them into being. It opened to them, whether they were Jews or Greeks, the only source of wisdom, the only fountain of power : a wisdom ever at hand to teach ; a power ever present to save and to defend.

5. The Jews sought after a power of a secular or worldly kind, which to this day they have not received ; while they rejected the spiritual power by which they might have been freed, ennobled, and saved from sin and sinfulness. The Greeks sought after a wisdom in the teaching and writings of their philosophers, which gave no true light to the mind, and no energy to the soul : all their boasted wisdom left them in the gall of bitterness, and bonds of iniquity.

6. All this power and wisdom was found in Christ—in Christ crucified. Through Christ came the teaching, and through him came the powerful salvation. All true believers, whether Jews or Greeks, found that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself; and that to the apostles, whom they had before despised, he had intrusted the ministry of reconciliation; and that by what the Greeks had called the foolishness of preaching, he saved them that believed from the power, guilt, and pollution of sin. Thus they saw that what they called folly was the supremest wisdom; and what they called weakness was the most mighty power; and they saw also, that by this folly and this weakness, so called, God had confounded the wisdom of the wise, and the strength of the mighty. In this the wisdom of God had appeared so signally, that the very things which they despised, and which they called base, God had chosen to bring to nought all their boasted excellence. So that, in a short time, their wisdom was disgraced, and the whole system of idolatry brought into contempt and ruin; and the doctrine of the cross alone triumphed. Behold how that which the wisdom of God has planned, his power has gloriously executed!

But although the Jews and Greeks, of whom the apostle speaks, are long since dead and gone, yet they have left a succession of representatives behind them, who have continued through all generations to the present time. These may be included in two classes:—

I. Those who are of a similar spirit with the Jews.

II. Those who are of the same spirit with the Greeks.

I. The Jews professed to believe in the true God; to receive a revelation from himself, to which they promised an implicit obedience; and yet looked for a Messiah and a kingdom that were of this world, and rejected the true Messiah when he came. Because they saw that he was

despised and rejected of men, they would not acknowledge him to be the Redeemer of Israel ; and therefore, not only rejected, but crucified him ! They who are their representatives, are all those who are looking for and steadily endeavouring to promote a secular state of the CHURCH, and to give it worldly power and earthly dominion.

1. The principal representatives and successors of the ancient Jewish sign-seekers are the heads and members of the Romish church. They have raised to themselves a visible head, a secular prince, who, besides his own ecclesiastical territories, claims precedence of all potentates—calls himself Christ's Vicar on earth ; assumes powers, dignities, and ascendancies far beyond anything Jesus Christ ever claimed. Jesus, the Creator and Lord of the world, had not where to lay his head ; for though he was rich, yet for the sake of man he became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be made rich. Far from assuming authority and domination over all the kings of the earth, he even paid tribute to the Roman heathen government ; and was obliged to work a miracle (so poor was he) in order to get the money necessary for the payment ! Nor had his disciples more than himself ; not even Peter, whose successors the popes of Rome pretend to be, had so much as half a shekel to pay for himself ; so that the miracle was wrought both in behalf of the master and his disciple, in order to discharge the demanded tax ! But the Roman pontiff and his adherents, that they might have the sign of secular power and worldly ascendancy, patched up a religion that was calculated to impose upon the judgment and understanding, by meeting the desires and gratifying the wishes of the carnal mind ; for as the world, as to matters of religion, had been divided among the Greeks and the Jews, and was now becoming Christian, they formed a multitude

of ecclesiastical rites and ceremonies, agreeing with a number of sensual dogmata, out of the three great creeds, the Heathen, the Jewish, and the Christian, and thus they hoped to make Christianity palatable to the Jew, because he found there many portions of his own creed ; and to the heathen, because he found the temples of his gods and goddesses devoted to Christian worship ; and, in many cases, the very same kind of rites observed—feasts that had belonged to the objects of his own heathen worship, offered to gods and goddesses, under the names of male and female saints, virgins, confessors, martyrs, &c. And the Christian, falling under the domination of this pretended vicar of Christ, and representative of St. Peter, dared not to dispute the determinations of one who was supreme in power, and proclaimed himself infallible in judgment, having authority to ordain rites and ceremonies, and to say, independently of the Scriptures, what should be believed, and what not ; and to support this anti-christian conduct, took away the key of knowledge from the common people, and gave them traditions, which spoke anything its inventors and donors pleased, in place of the Bible ; caused all the religious services to be performed in that very language and in those very temples in which Jupiter and Juno, Apollo and Diana, Bacchus and Venus, Mars and Flora, Ceres and Vesta, had been worshipped with rites little differing from those performed in honour of disputable saints, canonized sinners : and together with these they sinfully enrolled the Virgin Mary, as Cybele, Queen of Heaven, and Mother of God, with a ribald bead-roll of persons, called saints, confessors, and martyrs, with fathers and doctors, archangels and angels, &c., to whom prayers were addressed, libations poured out, vows made, and pilgrimages performed, in order to make satisfaction for sins, and create a superabundant stock of merits, which being at

the disposal of the church, might be given to those who had none, when they paid the church and performed certain penances, which should render them capable of appropriating the merits of those who had more than they needed for themselves ! And if anything were left unfinished or doubtful, a purgatory was feigned, for the refinement and cleansing of offences which had not been duly satisfied for in life ; and even in this place, the prayers of the church, purchased by the money of surviving friends, were of sovereign virtue—to alleviate and shorten the sufferings of the deceased culprits, and get them a speedier passport from penal fire to the paradise into which all sent thither by the church had an unalienable right to enter. And to keep this imposture from being perceived, the Scriptures were forbidden to be translated into the language of the people, who were called Christian ; and even a Version (indifferent enough in itself, but which had been authorized), though in a strange tongue, was not allowed to be read. Add to this, the pope and all his priests assumed the prerogative of forgiving all manner of sins, and sold indulgences to the profligate, by virtue of which they might commit sins for a specified time ; and this space was in proportion to the price paid for the indulgence. Nothing more truly destructive and infernal could have ever been suggested, either by the profligate cunning of man, or the malice of Satan ; and had not the reformation taken place, it is more than probable that pure Christianity would have been speedily abolished throughout Europe. Thus the church of Rome out-did, by innumerable degrees, all that had been done in the Jewish church by the worst of its rabbinical fables, puzzling genealogies, forged traditions, and false glosses on the words of God. And thus the worship of the true God was absorbed and lost in that of the Virgin Mary, and of real or reputed saints ; prayers

were offered to them, and daily were they praised. They had their offerings and their services, their feasts and vigils; and often whole classes of people were called by their names, instead of the name of Christ: hence Dominicans, Franciscans, Augustines, Carthusians, Benedictines, &c. &c., who had become a whirlpool to engulf Christianity. And what is called the Holy Catholic Church was on the eve of becoming a sink of heathenism; and if it have at all recovered itself from its sinful degradation, and travelled back on the records of salvation, it owes all this, under God, to Protestantism; to the exposure that was made of its superstitions, false doctrines, and abominable idolatries, by those holy and learned men called reformers, many of whom were objects of the bitterest wrath and most furious persecutions of that bloody church, while its supreme power and secular authority lasted. And those men, from whom it was obliged to take lessons, and who were ultimately its best benefactors, it obliged to pass through the flames to the paradise of God. In no nation has this church shown more fellness and ferocity than in this; the horrible persecutions under that most bad sovereign, Mary, urged on by her most inhuman prelates, were not only abhorrent from humanity, but also a scandal to the civilized world. In the order of God's merciful providence, the worldly sceptre, which was in the hands of that church, the sceptre of death, was wrested from it; and since that time its remaining power has been variously broken, till its secular influence has become almost totally annihilated: and now (1828), in its last convulsive agonies, it seeks restoration in Britain by claiming a right to make or remodel our laws, sit on our benches of justice, and grasp or direct the sceptre of the prince; that it may go out with strength renewed, from that country, the most potent in Europe, where it formerly had its firmest seat and

highest authority; and where it knows, if it once more get ascendancy, it will soon be in a condition to give its own laws to a bleeding death-wounded world. May the mercy of God prevent these evils, and the mighty power of his grace reform and regenerate that church, that it may become as pure and as holy as it was when the apostle of the Gentiles wrote his epistle to the church that was in Rome, "beloved of God, constituted saints,"—"whose faith was spoken of throughout the whole world," and "whose obedience had come abroad unto all men." And may it become illustrious in holiness, and reputable to the ends of the earth! It was once pure and holy; it may again become such. No genuine Protestant wishes its destruction. May it again become regenerated, its stones revived from their rubbish, its priests clothed with salvation, its children shout aloud for joy; and the whole, as a polished temple of the Lord, become a habitation of God, through the Spirit! Amen. Amen.

2. But the Jewish spirit of sign-seeking in its succession is not wholly confined to the Romish church: most churches, whether found in Rome, in Paris, in Petersburg, in Amsterdam, in Great Britain, Lisbon, or Madrid, whatever the form of their worship may have been, and of what complexion soever their creed, have given no unequivocal proofs of this sign-seeking spirit—all have sought for power; for rule and authority; a power above gospel law, if not above the civil law: and by this how many of our ancestors have been driven through Smithfield fires to heaven! This is the bent, not only of national churches, but of all others, where the body was numerous, and where their power of doing good had raised them to consequence in the land. Forgetting their heavenly strength, and that it was by grace they were saved, and by grace they stood; and that as

the love of God and man was their foundation, so was Christ their head ; they have often attempted to act, not as leaders, but as rulers of the people ; in which they have had no countenance either from Christ or his apostles. To all such churches and people, Christ ever has been a stumbling-block. Over him, in his simplicity, purity, heavenly-mindedness, and humility, they have stumbled, fallen, and have been broken. The image that they worshipped being set up in the holy place, fell on the threshold of the porch of his tabernacle ; its arms, its hands, and its head have been broken off ; and still granting that again there may be a general apostasy, yet the tabernacle of God shall, though in a wilderness, be found among men.

It has been remarked, also, that when such churches obtained power, they became persecutors of others. This must be granted as a general fact ; but a most honourable exception, in respect to the English Episcopal Protestant Church, must be made. Its doctrines are the pure principles of the gospel ; its spirit, the mild and benevolent spirit of Christianity. And for these it stands at the head of all the national churches on the earth. As a church, it never persecuted since it recovered from the dregs of popery, and I believe never will.

II. The representatives and successors of the ancient Greeks who sought after wisdom are they, who, losing sight of the spirituality of religion—knowing nothing or feeling nothing of communion with God, the witness of his Spirit, and the necessity of maintaining a daily walk with him, and of having a powerful spiritual ministry—endeavour to bring down religion to the taste of the world, and to find certain substitutes for all these things ; oppose the preaching of Christ crucified, unless all his work be confined to what he has done *for* us, without any reference to what he is to do *in* us.



In such circumstances, the simple and forcible method of preaching the gospel soon degenerates, and rhetoric or oratory is studied much more than divinity. A copious flow and elegance of language—words of splendid sound, imposing epithets, and striking figures and similes, are everywhere sought, in order to form harmonious sentences, and finely turned periods ; a fustian language, misnamed *oratory*, is thus introduced into the church of Christ ; but when the words of this are analysed, they are found, however musically arranged, to be destitute of force ; so that a dozen of such expressions will labour in vain to produce one single impressive idea that can illuminate the understanding, correct the judgment, or persuade the conscience either to hate sin or love righteousness. “How forcible are right words !” can never be applied to such sermons ; they may please the giddy and superficial, but they neither edify the saint, nor bring conviction into the bosom of the sinner. And what redounds to their reproach and discredit is, they are flowers meanly stolen from the gardens of others.

When Moses was appointed to bring the church through the wilderness to the Promised Land, he saw the utter impossibility of it, *unless God went with them*. Moses well knew that it was utterly impossible to govern and sustain such a numerous people in such a place without supernatural and miraculous assistance. God therefore promises that “His presence shall go with them, and give them rest ;” *Exod. xxiii. 14, &c.* And on the fulfilment of this promise the safety of Israel depended.

The church of God is often now in such a state that the full approbation of God cannot be manifested in it ; and yet if his presence were wholly withdrawn, truth would fall in the street, equity so backward, and the church become extinct. How strangely have the seeds

of light and life been preserved during the long, dark, and cold periods when error was triumphant, and the pure worship of God adulterated by the impurities of idolatry, and the thick darkness of superstition ! This was by the presence of his endless mercy preserving his own truth in circumstances in which he could not show his full approbation. He was with the church in the wilderness, in its worst state, and preserved the holy oracles, kept alive the heavenly seeds, and afterwards showed forth the glory of those designs, which before he had concealed from mankind, by commissioning extraordinary men to adopt extraordinary means in order to revive those seeds, and call the people back to first principles, and to that truth the sight of which they had lost. To this procedure of divine mercy and kindness we owe the present revival of religion in this land ; the greatest, the most powerful, and most diffusive that has taken place since the apostolic times. A revival, which continues to revive ; at first like the little cloud, no larger than a human hand, but now overspreading the heavens, and pouring out its fertilizing showers of truth, holiness, mercy, and charity, over both hemispheres of the earth. May its friends never corrupt it ; for, as to its enemies, they can never prevail against it.

We have now seen who the Jews and Greeks were of the apostle's time, and who may be considered their representatives and successors in the present day ; how the doctrine of *Christ crucified* was a *stumbling-block* to the one, and *foolishness* to the other ; and that, notwithstanding, this doctrine ever was and ever will be the power of God to the salvation of all that believe. From this we may learn, that to interest the power of God in the conviction and conversion of sinners, and the building up his church in righteousness and true holiness ; to have his wisdom manifested, not

only in teaching his ministers and people, but also in the various means used by him to teach, save, and defend them ; and to preserve a holy people on the earth, who shall be faithful to his truth ; is to preach CHRIST CRUCIFIED, and walk in his light ; as he alone is the *Way*, the *Truth*, and the *Life* ; for no man cometh unto the Father, but by him ! Amen.

There is yet another sense in which it may be said that these Jews and Greeks still have representatives in the Christian church.

1. The Jews well knew that God had made a covenant with Abraham and all his posterity, taking him and them into his special protection, and giving them exceeding and gracious promises, and also enjoining circumcision as the sign of this covenant ; and had commanded them to observe certain rites and ceremonies to distinguish them from all other people, and preserve them from idolatry. It is true that all these things had spiritual meanings and references with which they intermeddled little, but believed their state was perfectly safe as long as a well kept genealogy could show them that they had "Abraham for their father,"—that they had been circumcised the eighth day after their birth,—and had conscientiously observed the ordinances of their law. Of a spiritual religion, and a circumcision of the heart, they knew nothing, and would know nothing, but *depended wholly on those works of their law* for justification and final admittance into eternal glory. In short, their religion was no religion of the heart, but one of rites and ceremonies.

2. It is from this character and these pretensions of the ancient Jews being very similar to the character and pretensions of many who profess themselves to be Christians, that we are justified in saying, "They have, even now, their representatives in the Christian Church."

There are multitudes of people who think all is right if their creed be sound ; and of this, whatsoever the creed may be, how few doubt ! This nation was once heathen, but, by the mercy of God, it became Christian ; true religion being corrupted, the nation was afterwards popish, but became protestant. It is enough with many that they are neither in their profession, nor in their form of worship, papal. They look with the highest respect to the ancient reformers : they see Luther and Calvin on the Continent ; Knox, in Scotland ; and Cranmer, in England ; and these have they for their fathers. The catechisms, creeds, confessions of faith, and liturgies or directories of those eminent men, they have taken for their own ; and while they hold these, have no doubt of the soundness of their creed, and strict propriety of their mode of worship. And if they add to all this a regular attendance on the means of grace, reverently hearing the word preached, and duly receiving the holy sacrament, and being true and just in all their dealings, they are fully persuaded they have nothing farther to do, and nothing to fear. Now these, like the ancient Jewish Pharisees, do “make clean the outside of the cup and platter ;” and so far it is well and laudable : but is this enough ? Will not these acknowledge that they have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ; that they have come into the world with a fallen, sinful nature,—and that they cannot atone for the former, nor cleanse themselves from the latter ? If, then, it required the death of Christ to make atonement for the sin of the world ; if it be “impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin ;” is it not equally impossible that the observance of religious rites and ceremonies should be effectual ? That no human performance of any kind, how well soever it may be intentioned, can satisfy the demands of Divine justice, for sins already com-

mitted ; or anything but the blood of Jesus purge a guilty conscience, or cleanse a polluted soul ? “ But God knows we are imperfect and weak, therefore he accepts sincere, in the stead of perfect, obedience.” But still, Have you not sinned ? “ Granted.” Then how does it stand between Divine justice and you ? “ Why, we must do the best we can ; and God, for Christ’s sake, will accept us ; and in this way justice will have no farther claim.” You mean, then, that you will do a part, and Christ will do the rest ! Alas, for you ! Such is the nature of sin, and the holiness of God, that it requires an infinitely meritorious sacrifice to purge the slightest guilt. Your attachment to your creed, if it be sound, and your discharge of religious and social duties, may be good evidences of your sincerity ; and that you are seeking God in his own way ; but they cannot atone for what is past, cleanse your fallen heart, or give you a title to the kingdom of glory. Heaven and earth have not been able to find out other ransom, sacrifice, or atonement for sin. Jesus alone, and him crucified, is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. No outward thing can avail, no obedience can help, either to justify or sanctify. The soul must be regenerated, all guilt must be purged away, and the heart must be cleansed. “ But we have been regenerated, for we have been duly baptized.” Baptism is the *sign* of regeneration, but it is not the thing ; it is “ the outward and visible *sign* of an inward and spiritual grace.” You must be “ born of water, and of the Spirit.” Water is the *emblem* of the spiritual washing, but it is not the washing itself : “ That which is born of the flesh is flesh ;” and “ that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,” is holy, pure, and heavenly. If your water baptism had been spiritual regeneration, you would have a heart “ cleansed from all unrighteousness,” free from pride,

wrath, evil desires, bad tempers, &c. But you who depend upon this *circumcision* of the flesh have not this; and you know you never had it. Therefore you want the blood that atones and purifies from all unrighteousness. Your having the reformers for your fathers, baptism for the seal of your covenant, your attendance on church and sacrament for the foundation of your hope of glory, can raise you no higher than Abraham as their father, circumcision as the seal of their covenant, sacrifices and ceremonies carefully offered and performed, as the foundation of their hope of the continuance of the divine favour, did the ancient Jews. On these things *they* depended; on such things *you* depend. *They* stumbled at “Christ crucified as the only atonement for sin;” *you* stumble at the doctrine of “Christ dwelling in the heart by faith,” and at having “the thoughts of your hearts purified by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit,” so that you might perfectly love God, and worthily magnify his name. You and those Jews are precisely in the same state, morally considered; and of them you are accurate representatives. Why then live comparative infidels under the Gospel? Go to God by faith in Christ crucified. Plead the merit of his passion and death alone; nor rest till you feel him to be to you the “power of God, and the wisdom of God.” Honesty, justice, integrity, and a strictly religious conduct, are all excellent, and are indispensable in the Christian character. But they are not the “blood of atonement,—the purifying influences of the Holy Ghost;” nor can they be their substitutes. In general, in the persons of whom we speak, they are but the semblance and shades of those graces, factitious and outside, often full of pride, vain-glory, and self-seeking: they spring not from God as their root. But where the atonement is applied, the guilty conscience

pardoned, the heart purified by faith, there honesty, justice, integrity, a strictly religious conduct,—in a word, the “mind that was in Jesus,” producing these fruits, and evidencing itself by love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, and temperance, the love of God, and the love of man, as the fruits of the Spirit; these spring up with energy and strength, and all produce their respective classes of effects, which prove them to be of God, and such as never yet sprang from any soul where Christ did not dwell by faith, and work by love.

We may find representatives of the Greeks of the same description.

1. The ancient Greeks sought after wisdom, and reckoned the preaching of the Cross foolishness. There is a considerable class in the Christian church, who are thus embusied, and with the same feelings. As the gospel is to be preached especially to the poor, it must be proclaimed in the utmost simplicity. It is a system of well-attested facts,—these should be fully stated; there is a grand system of doctrines or teachings built on these facts,—these should be clearly pointed out; there is a corresponding line of practice deducible from these facts and doctrines,—this should be powerfully urged, and urged too on the ground of the facts themselves, viz., That man had totally fallen from God, and is utterly unable to restore himself; in his lapsed state he is not only wretched, but exposed to the bitter pains of an endless death; that God in his mercy has provided a ransom for his soul, for in his love he has sent his Son into the world, him in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; that he suffered and died in his stead, and that through this passion and death there is a way made to the holiest; and that God, though infinitely just, can justify and save all them who believe in Christ as cru-

cified for them, and risen again for their justification ; and that this is the only way in which God will save man, make him happy here, and glorious to eternity.

2. But the representatives of the Greeks, which I have particularly in view, and who, above all others, affect to seek after wisdom, boldly assert that in the gospel scheme, as we take it, there is no wisdom ; it is not only foolishness, but point blank injustice and cruelty, to cause an innocent person to suffer for the guilty. However this may appear to them, God has most positively declared it in that revelation which they cannot confute. A revelation that bears his image and likeness, and the authenticity of which he is daily sealing by fulfilling those promises which have God's yea, and are Amen in him.

The preaching of Christ, as "dying, the just for the unjust," is that alone which God blesses yearly to the salvation of myriads ; and this doctrine, and none other, does he ever bless to the conversion and salvation of sinners. And we, who preach Christ crucified, defy these wise Greeks to show that God ever blesses the preaching of the contrary doctrine. By this alone are the drunkards, liars, sabbath-breakers, unclean, dishonest, and wicked of every class, converted from the error of their ways. By this preaching, those who were pests of society, and a scandal to man; have become honest, upright, decent, orderly, industrious, holy, and useful. In preaching to the heathen, this is the only doctrine by which they are affected, enlightened, changed, civilized ; and the brute or savage, changed into a man, answers the end of his being, and becomes a blessing to his fellows. If this be foolishness, it is that "foolishness of God which is wiser than man." It is that foolishness by which men become wise unto salvation ; and while they learn an important creed, feel a deep and



most beneficial change. A change which proves God is in his work ; for neither man nor angel can cause such to differ so essentially from their former selves.

3. Several wise and benevolent Greeks of this description have attempted to convert the heathen, and especially the Indians of North America, by teaching them the arts of civilization. Satan, and the corrupt untractable spirit of man, laugh all such endeavours to scorn. The savage can be civilized only by the gospel ; and true religion and civilization always go hand in hand.

4. Again, such Greeks as the above lay the utmost stress on human learning ; nothing can be done without this, and, provided it be a learned ministry, no attention is paid to its usefulness. By their leave, learning neither opens the eyes of the blind, nor converts souls. Even among ministers, we do not always find that the most learned are either the most holy or the most useful. Learning is good and useful in its place, if it be used only as a handmaid to religion ; but it never did, and never can, convert a soul. In this respect, also, the gospel of Jesus, fully and faithfully preached, is the “ power and wisdom of God ” to the salvation of all them that believe. Notwithstanding the contradiction of the obstinate and hardened Jews, and the ridicule of the proud and self-sufficient Greeks, we must proceed, as we have done, to preach Christ crucified ; as this is made to all that obey the call, the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Therefore,—

Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father ; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

## SERMON XXVI.

### DESIGN AND USE OF JEWISH SACRIFICES : THAT OF CHRIST THE ONLY ATONEMENT.

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HEBREWS ix. 13, 14.

13. "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh :

14. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God ?"

THERE are certain ordinances of the Mosaic law to which the apostle refers here, which should be noticed and explained, before we can see the force of his reasoning, and the truth of his conclusion.

I. The sacrificial offerings of *bulls* and *goats*.

II. What is called the ordinance of the *red heifer*

I. When God chose the Israelites to be a peculiar people, and to make them depositaries of his laws, which contained a revelation of his will, and, at least, a typical representation of what was, in his determination, necessary to be done, in order to save the souls of men ; he instituted living sacrifices of various kinds, which were to be of clean animals of a certain age, and the most perfect of their respective kinds ; and being brought by the offerer to the altar or place of sacrifice, who, after confessing his sins, his hands being laid on the head of

the victim, he delivered them to the priests, who slew and poured out their life-blood before the Lord ; and, sprinkling part of it on the altar, the act was considered an atonement for the sin of the owner ; and showed that, as he had forfeited his life by having sinned against God, the merciful Judge had accepted the life of the animal instead of his ; and that, by the sprinkling of a part of the blood upon himself, he should consider himself dedicated to God ; and he should afterwards walk in newness of life, having due respect to all the commandments of his Creator.

The most usual victims were the cow, the goat, and the sheep, with their young—calves, kids, and lambs. These three kinds may be considered as comprised here under the general terms of bulls or calves, and goats ; though in many instances the kid, the lamb, and the steer are mentioned as the proper victims in specified cases.

II. The ordinance of the *red heifer* was both singular and curious, and was intended, no doubt, to typify the sacrifice of our blessed Lord ; and was probably chosen in opposition to an idolatrous superstition of the Egyptians. In this ordinance several curious particulars may be observed :—

1. Though *males* were generally preferred for sacrifice, yet here a *female* is ordered, in opposition to the Egyptian superstition, which held cows sacred ; for they actually worshipped their great goddess Ibis under this form.

2. It was a red *heifer* ; for red *bulls* were, by the Egyptians, sacrificed to appease the evil demon Typhon, worshipped among them.

3. This heifer was to be without spot, not only being sound, and without any natural blemish, but without any mixture of colour ; for among the Egyptians, if there

were a single hair either white or black found on the animal, the sacrifice was marred. The spot in the text may refer to the colour; the blemish, to any bodily imperfection in the animal.

4. It was to be one on which never yoke came. Because any animal which had been used for any common purpose was, by universal consent, deemed unworthy and improper to be offered in sacrifice to God; for not only the Hebrews, but the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans forbade the sacrifice of any kine that had been used for agricultural purposes. The Egyptians borrowed their notions of sacrifice from the patriarchs; the Greeks from them; the Romans from the Greeks; but the Hebrews had theirs immediately from God. No wonder, therefore, that there is a striking similarity in the religious rites of all those nations.

5. The heifer was to be slain, and her blood sprinkled seven times before the tabernacle by the priest.

6. The body, with all the intestines and their contents, the skin, blood, &c., were to be reduced to ashes, and while burning, cedar-wood, hyssop, and scarlet were to be thrown into the flame.

7 These ashes were to be carefully collected, and kept in a clean place, at a distance from the camp, for general use.

8. If any person had contracted any legal uncleanness, by touching the dead, or touching a person who had been murdered, or a human bone, or a grave, some of these ashes were to be mixed with water, and sprinkled on the unclean person; who, after having been thus sprinkled, and his clothes and body afterwards washed, was considered as *clean*—might not only mingle with society at large, but was fit to take part in any religious ordinance.

9. The water in which those ashes were mixed was

called *the water of purifying* ; and as the ashes were carefully preserved, there was always at hand a mode of purifying the unclean ; and the preparation itself appears to have been looked on as a concentration of the essential properties of the red heifer, considered, as it should be, a real sin-offering ; and to this mode of purifying the people might continually resort, with comparatively little expense, little trouble, and almost no loss of time : and as there were many things by which legal pollution might be contracted, it was necessary to have always at hand, in all their dwellings, a mode of purifying at once convenient and unexpensive. And we learn from the text, that these ashes, mingled with water, and sprinkled on the unclean, and which sanctified to the purification of the flesh, were intended to typify the blood of Christ, “which purges the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God ;” for as without this sprinkling with the water of the sin-offering, the Levites were not fit to serve God in the wilderness, so, without the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, no conscience can be purged from dead works to serve the living God. See the whole ordinance concerning the red heifer, Numb. xix. 1—22. See also Numb. viii. 6, 7, where this water is called מֵי חַטָּאת *mei chataath*, “water of sin,” or “water of the sin-offering ;” showing that the red heifer was considered a real sin-offering ; and compare the text with 1 Pet. i. 19, where, in reference to this ordinance, the redemption of the soul is referred to the precious blood of Christ, who, as a Lamb without blemish and without spot, had offered himself unto God, and entered in “once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for men.” And see Lev. xvi. 14—16, where the blood of bulls and of goats is represented, not only as “sprinkling the unclean to the purifying of the flesh,” but also as being an atonement for the sins and transgressions of

the people ; which places sufficiently vindicate the assertion of the apostle in the text.

Having thus considered the Mosaic ordinances to which the apostle refers in the text, and shown that what he says of and attributes to them is a fair representation of what was intended by them in their original institution ; I come now to consider his argument, viz., “If the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purification of the flesh ; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God ?” with which we must collate what is said chap. x. 4 : “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.” However these sacrifices and ceremonies, according to legal institution, might sanctify to the purifying of the *flesh*, they could neither take away the *guilt of sin*, nor cleanse the *soul* from unrighteousness.

From the whole we learn that there are *two* subjects referred to here, which appear to engross the principal attention of men :—

1. One of these we hear of pretty generally, and always see.

2. The other is often a subject of discussion, but is very seldom seen.

3. The former is with difficulty defined ; and, as it seems to subsist simply as a negation, can only be defined in reference to its effects.

4. The latter is a positive quality, and may be defined in itself, from its tendency.

5. The first is a poison which infects the whole human constitution.

6. The last is the antidote to that poison ; and, though often exhibited, is seldom applied.

7. The first is *sin* ; the second, *salvation* from it.

8. As the first is everywhere seen, and the last, but seldom, it is to be inferred, that the first predominates, and that the last has but a limited and partial sway.

Let us endeavour to examine these two subjects.

*Sin* has been variously defined ; not in reference to itself, as a principle, but as a negative quality ; yet producing positive effects, demonstrative of its qualities, and the necessary results of its agency.

*Salvation* is defined as a positive quality, producing effects which are fairly deducible from its nature and origin ; which effects prove its benign agency.

The definition of the first is four-fold :—

1st. Any want of conformity to the nature and will of God ; or,

2nd. It is the transgression of the law of God ; or,

3rd. It is to be defined from the terms used to express it in the Old and New Testaments ; in the Old, חטא *chatah*, in the New, ἀμαρτία ; both derived from roots that signify “to miss the mark ;” or,

4th. According to Plato, sin is something both devoid of number and measure ; in opposition to virtue, which he made to consist in harmony or musical numbers.

Let us examine each of these definitions.

1. The first definition, “want of conformity to the will and nature of God,” cannot stand ; for a stone or tree, though both perfect in their kinds, are not in conformity to the moral perfections of God. But if the definition be restrained to intelligent beings, endued with free agency, created under a particular law, with powers adequate to its enactments, which powers they have in their free agency abused ; the definition may stand in reference to the angels who kept not their first estate ; and to our first parents in Paradise, who abused theirs, and fell off from their allegiance to God : these, being

partakers of the divine nature, had no written law, but the nature and will of God, well understood and expressed, whether intuitively, or by an oracular voice.

2. The second is taken from the Holy Scriptures themselves; for thus saith St. John (1 Epist. iii. 4), “Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law.” But even this refers to the effect of the principle of sin, or the sinful disposition in uncontrolled agency, as to that immediate act; for the law of God having forbidden all kinds of sin, i. e., acts, mental or external, which are contrary to God’s holiness and authority, he that acts contrary to this law shows by the transgression that he possesses the unholy and rebellious disposition; which is what we generally mean by the term sin. The man has transgressed the law; sin has led him to do so.

Now sin, being the transgression of the law, in the ordinary use of the term, supposes a previously existing and published law, consequently a law well known; this applies to divine revelation, by which actions are weighed: the transgressions, therefore, of this law are without excuse, because this law, in its promises and penalties, has been published, and given to all as a rule of life, and is acknowledged by all to be holy, just, and good—a pure law, suited to such a being as was made in the image and likeness of God.

3. The third definition, taken from those terms in the Old and New Testaments which we translate *sin*; viz., חטא *chatah*, and ἁμαρτία, signify to take a wrong aim, to miss the mark, as in shooting or slinging. So the seven hundred left-handed Benjamite archers, every one of whom could sling stones at a hair’s breadth, and *not miss*, Judg. xx. 16. To miss the mark in aiming at happiness, Job v. 24, “Thou shalt visit thy habitation, and *shalt not sin* ;” i. e., err, miss of enjoyment, but shalt



find thyself happy in the comforts of life. Thus the Hebrew word ; and so nearly allied are the disease and the remedy, that חַטָּאת *chataath* signifies a *sin-offering*, an *atonement for sin*.

The Greek word ἁμαρτία, SIN, from ἁμαρτανω, compounded of α, *negative*, and μαρπτω, *to hit the mark*, is the same in meaning as the Hebrew ; and the same remark may apply to this word, as to that above ; for ἁμαρτία not only signifies *sin*, but also a *sin-offering*, and is so used in numerous places in the Septuagint. It may, therefore, be truly said, that sin causes men to miss the mark of true happiness ; for all deviations from the law of God, prompted by the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life, in search of that happiness which is supposed to be found in sensual gratifications, are a palpable *missing of the mark* in reference to the attainment of true happiness, which is found only in the possession and enjoyment of the Divine favour, from which their passions continually both lead and drive them.

4. The fourth definition is very singular, viz., “SIN is that which is without NUMBER and without MEASURE.” This gives a strong meaning, which we might express by these two terms—it is that which is *discordant*, and that which is *extravagant*. It is bounded by no measure ; it is a whole system of discords without concords ; it is noise without harmony. It possesses nothing like regular progression, as numbers do ; nor can be brought by any collocation of units or acts, to express what is even or regular. It runs out into all extravagant actions, without right direction or proper object ; it is confusion in itself, and leads to and begets confusion ; it breaks established order, and exists in fragments, without arrangement, definable form, or possible component parts ; and as it is without order or possible composition, so is it

without harmony, melody, or cadence. It is worse than the poetic chaos, which had the principles of all things without arrangement; nothing assorted, nor as yet assortable—

*Non bene junctarum discordia semina rerum.*

It is darkness and confusion, opposition and misrule: it is a congeries of harsh, horrid, ear-breaking, stridulous sounds,—

*Bombalia, clangor, stridor, taratartara, murmur.*

In short, to sum up with the Greek philosopher, “It is that which is without number, and without measure.” And even this is not its worst; it is the disorder and curse of creation, the disgrace of the body, the ruin of the soul, and the eternal perdition of both.

Sin is a want of conformity to God—the transgression of the law—the erring aim that ever misses the mark of public utility and private happiness—the numberless disorder and the incommensurable confusion of inexpressible length, breadth, and thickness; it is the pit of the bottomless pit, and the torment that has there its ever-during reign.

But leaving all definitions of the thing, let us look into that published law, the revelation of God, which refers to the nature of sin, the extent of its devastations, and its fearful consequences.

Let us hear it speak: “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them.” Let us hear its declaration of its nature: “The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Let us hear it point out its devastations: “The whole world lieth in wickedness,” and, “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.”

And the termination is, "The wicked shall be turned into hell,\*with all that forget God." THERE "their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

But cannot man raise himself out of this ruinous state? No, for he is fallen—fallen from God, and has lost that image of God—righteousness and true holiness, in which he was created. In consequence, his wickedness became great in the earth; he filled it with violence; "for every imagination of his heart was only evil continually." But had he no redeeming quality, as the slang of novelists is? No: there is no such power inherent in the human soul. All is darkness, insensibility, and opposition to God and goodness; he is totally indisposed to every good purpose, and incapable of every good work. He has sinned, and can neither undo what is done, nor make an atonement for the past. He is in a word guilty and sinful; yea, sold under sin.

But if man be thus totally fallen, sinful, and helpless, How can he be *judged*? How can he possibly be *saved*?

The first question may be answered in a few words: though man in his fall lost all his spiritual light, power, and life; yet to make him accountable for his own actions, and to bring him into a salvable state, a measure of divine light has been supernaturally restored by him who is "the true Light, lightening every man that cometh into the world;" and this light shows him his ruined state, and points out him, through whom salvation comes. So fallen is human nature, that without this supernatural light, none could be considered in a salvable state. This light, uniting with the light of divine revelation, points out the salvation of which I have spoken; and that salvation comes by the person called Christ, or the Messiah, in the text.

But who is he of whom such great and wonderful

things are spoken? He is no less than God manifested in the flesh! This is a most extraordinary case, into which even the angels desire to look. God might have been manifested in and through an angel, as he was in the patriarchal times. An angelic nature, pure and holy, could be no disparagement to God; for that spotless nature proceeded from himself. God might have been manifested in the Jewish tabernacle; that was a wooden portable temple, where a symbol of the divine presence was evident; for there could be nothing morally impure in the innocent timbers and boards of which it was constructed; but for God to have been manifested in the flesh—in that human nature that had fallen from, and rebelled against the Almighty Sovereign, was the most extreme of all cases, and the most extraordinary of all wonders and miracles! Yet such a manifestation God found necessary; for although the rites and sacrifices already explained were instituted by God himself, yet he intended them to be considered as types; for he ever showed that “it was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin;” and hence a body, human nature, was prepared for this Christ, when the time came that sacrifice, offering, and burnt-offering, and sacrifice for sin should cease, as things in which God had never delighted; and that he, in whom God was well pleased, should be born of a woman, and be made in the likeness of man; and that in that man all the fulness of the Godhead bodily might dwell.

But human nature, free from the infection of sin, must be provided; and how could such a corrupt source produce what is pure and holy? The Psalmist answers, “A body hast thou prepared me.” The body was produced by the Holy Spirit in the womb of a spotless virgin; the body came from God—not from man—it was God’s preparation, there was no human act in refer-

ence to generation ; the creative energy of the Divine Spirit alone was that which was employed ; on this point the prophets and evangelists are express ; they declare this as a fact ; and evidently with a design that faith might receive this fact in the fullest assurance ; and a body thus produced was a shrine more worthy of the indwelling of God than either tabernacle or temple, how glorious soever they might have been ; and more suited to the sacrificial offering that was to be made, than any angelic nature could be, how pure soever that nature might be ; for it was in human nature, not in the angelic nature, that the offence was committed and sin contracted. “Let,” says reason, “human nature suffer, for it alone has sinned.” But human nature, in its ordinary state, could not suffer in an expiatory manner, because it is corrupt, sinful, and under the curse ; hence the necessity of a pure human nature, pleasing to God, because pure and innocent, and dignified ineffably in all its actions and sufferings by its union with the divine nature. Mr. Burkitt’s saying on this subject can never be too often repeated : “Jesus Christ was MAN, that he might have blood to shed ; and he was GOD, that when the blood was shed it might be of infinite value.”

As in the wisdom of God, the time of this manifestation was fixed, to bring about the great design ; in the interim, God gave what is called the Old Covenant or Mosaic Covenant. This word is not generally understood, and has been often badly applied. *Covenant*, from two Latin words, *con*, together, and *venir*, to come—signifies an agreement between two parties, who were either unknown previously to each other, or were in a state of hostility or alienation ; and by what is called a covenant they are brought together, and bound by mutual conditions to keep the agreement inviolate ; and generally, in very solemn and important cases, a sacrifice was offered

on the occasion, which being equally divided asunder, and the two halves laid opposite to each other, the contracting parties, entering at each end of the divided victim, and meeting in the centre, took the covenant oath, swearing to be true and faithful to the contract then made ; and intimating that he who should first break any of the conditions of the covenant, would deserve to be slain and cut to pieces, as the victim had been.

The covenant between God and the Hebrews, though including many most solemn and excellent things, was summarily expressed in a few words : on the part of Jehovah, “ I will be thy God ;” on the part of the Israelites, “ We will be thy people.”

In a covenant, the following things were chiefly to be considered : 1. The contracting parties, who expressed perfect willingness to enter into the contract. 2. The conditions or terms of the covenant to which all agreed. 3. The victim that was to be slain on the occasion. 4. The Mediator of the covenant, whose business it was, 1. To witness the terms of the agreement ; 2. To slay the victim ; and 3. To sprinkle the contracting parties with the blood. The victim was slain *then* and *there*—his life’s blood was poured out, and that blood caught by the mediator, was that which was sprinkled by him on the contracting parties. But where the covenant was made between God and the people, the blood was sprinkled on the altar and on the people ; the altar being the representative of the omnipresent but invisible God.

The mediator was often a priest ; Jesus is called, not only a priest, but also a Mediator ; and in the covenant of redemption he is the Sacrifice, for he offered himself, and was at once both Priest and Sacrifice. But in the context the Holy SPIRIT is represented as the Mediator ; and the text says, “ Christ through the eternal Spirit

offered himself without spot to God," ver. 4. It is the office of the Holy Spirit to witness to the conscience of man the covenant and its conditions—to apply the blood of sprinkling, and to take the things that are Christ's, and show them to men ; and it is his province to witness to the heart of the believing penitent, that by this shed blood, his "conscience is purged from dead works to serve the living God." He is also the sanctifying Spirit, the Spirit of judgment, and the Spirit of burning ; and as such he condemns to utter destruction the whole of the carnal mind, and "purifies the very thoughts of the heart by his inspiration," enabling the true believer "perfectly to love God, and worthily to magnify his holy name ;" and this same Spirit, dwelling in the soul of a believer, seals him an heir of eternal glory.

From what has already been observed, we see what the blood of bulls and goats, and the sprinkling of the ashes of a heifer, could not do in reference to religion and salvation.

1. "They sanctified to the purifying of the flesh." They rendered the persons legally clean that were before legally *unclean* or *defiled* ; that is, those who had *touched a dead body*, or even any *bone of a dead body*, and were thereby unqualified to use any religious ceremony, or join in the public worship of God ;—such persons, after offering the appointed sacrifices, and receiving the aspersion of the ashes of the burnt heifer, mixed with water, were then considered to be sanctified, that is, consecrated afresh to God and his service ;—but though by getting the privilege of using the means of grace, they were placed in the way of moral improvement and salvation, yet no moral change was made in their minds, no sin blotted out, no holiness imparted, by those ceremonies. They only "sanctified to the purification of the flesh ;" from them the soul received no benefit.

2ndly. Let us consider what those sacrifices and sprinklings could do. They were types of better things than themselves. They pointed out the true and available sacrifice, that makes atonement for sin ; that blood shed, without which there is no remission, and that sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, by which the conscience is purged from dead works. This is all they either did or could do. All referred either to the purifying of the flesh, or the pointing out of the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world, and who taketh away the sin of the world.

And is there any outward thing, any sacrifice, offering, washing, sprinkling, rite, duty, ceremony, religious performance, fasting, abstinence, attrition, contrition, alms, or pilgrimages, that can do more ? In a certain way, they may sanctify to the purifying of the flesh, but nothing more ; nothing can pardon but the mercy which flows freely through the blood of the cross ; nothing can purify but the mighty Spirit of God, which comes through the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Other refuge for the miserable—other name as the object of faith—other sacrifice as an atonement for sin—other help or saviour is not found in the heavens above, in the earth beneath, nor in the waters under the earth. Through this, and this alone, God can be just, and yet the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

The sum of the whole is, 1. That the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin.

2. That it required the incarnation of Christ, and his sacrificial offering, to take away the guilt of sin, and reconcile us to God.

3. That what was procured by his offering, viz., pardon, holiness, and, in a word, complete salvation, must be applied, not to the body, but to the heart and conscience.

4. That this application can be made by the eternal



Spirit only; there being no substitute. None can come to the Father but through the Son, by the eternal Spirit.

5. That the pure in heart only can see God ; and as the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all unrighteousness, so the Spirit alone can apply the cleansing efficacy of this blood.

6. We see from the text, that God the Father—CHRIST the Saviour—and the ETERNAL SPIRIT the Sanctifier, act together in this work of salvation : and so important and so difficult is it, that it requires the holy, blessed, undivided, and glorious Trinity to effect it ; for thus the apostle, “How much more shall the blood of CHRIST, who through the Eternal SPIRIT offered himself without spot to GOD, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God ?”

But shall we do as too many do, admire the goodness of God in providing a Saviour for them, and yet continue unsaved ? They trust in what Christ has done for them, but seem comparatively unconcerned about what Christ is to do in them. This is the common bane of multitudes who hesitate not to rank themselves among religious people. No minister can be too earnest in warning his flock against this common error, which is very nearly allied to another error, not improperly called a death-bed purgatory : they vainly hope to receive in death what they neither looked for nor expected in life, viz., a sanctified nature, a heart purified from all unrighteousness. Even their state of grace is problematical, though they have often prayed to be pardoned, yet they have not looked for pardon ; probably never felt the pangs of a guilty conscience, nor the plague of their own hearts. Though they have, no doubt, repeatedly felt smart twinges in their conscience, they have endeavoured to quiet them with a few such aspirations as these, “Lord, have mercy upon me. Lord, forgive me, and lay not this sin

to my charge, for Christ's sake!" Thus, of the work of repentance they know little—they have not suffered their pangs of conscience to form themselves into true repentance—a deep conviction of their lost and ruined state both by nature and practice—conviction of sin, and contrition for sin, have only had a superficial influence upon their hearts. Their repentance is not a deep and radical work; they have not suffered themselves to be led into the various chambers of the house of imagery, to detect the hidden abominations that have everywhere been set up against the honour of God, and the safety of their own souls: when they have felt a little smarting from a wound of sin, they have got it slightly healed; and their repentance is that of which they may repent, it was partial and inefficient; and its end proves this. They have not, through the excess of sorrow for sin, fled to lay hold on the hope set before them; and refused to be comforted, till they felt that word powerfully spoken into their hearts, "Son! daughter! be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." No man should consider his repentance as having answered a saving end to his soul, till he feels that God for Christ's sake has forgiven him his sins; and the Spirit of God testifies with his Spirit that he is a child of God. Those who by their preaching cause the people to rest short of this, and to be satisfied with such a problematic repentance and conversion, are healing the hurt of the people slightly; and crying, "Peace! peace!" where God has not spoken peace. All the advantage that such people have under such preaching, is, at best, no better to them than "the blood of bulls and of goats, and the sprinkling of the ashes of a heifer." They have not had the work of repentance, nor the work of faith, nor the patience of hope, and consequently are not able to perform to God or man the labour of love. "Their consciences are not purged from dead

works ;” and therefore they cannot by a loving obedience “serve the living God.”

Reader, learn that true repentance is a work, and not the work of an hour : it is not a passing regret, but a deep and alarming conviction, that thou art a fallen spirit, hast broken God’s laws, art under his curse, and in danger of hell fire. Think also that the grave may be ready for thee ; that here thou hast no continuing city, that now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation. Now, God waits to be gracious to thee, to grant thee repentance unto life, to blot out thy sins, and give thee an assurance of his love : and in that day thou wilt praise him ; for though he was angry with thee, his anger is turned away, for lo, he comforteth thee. Henceforth thou mayest draw with joy water out of the wells of salvation. And if thou follow on to know the Lord, thou wilt soon find, in addition to the pardon thou hast received, that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth thee from all sin. Thus, thou wilt magnify God, for the work that Christ has wrought in thee, as well as for that which he has wrought for thee.

And now remember for what end God has purged thy conscience from dead works,—works which procured not the life but the death of the soul. It is, that thou mayest serve the living God. The phrase *νεκρά ἔργα*, *dead works*, is only used here and in chap. vi. 1 : it refers to those dead things by which legal defilement was contracted ; and in both the above places, it seems to be intended by the apostle, to point out such works as deserve death, the works of those who are dead in trespasses, and dead in sins, and dead by sentence of the law, because they had by these works broken the law. The conscience being purged from dead works, signifies the forgiveness of all those sins, the sentence of death reversed, and the spirit of life imparted, so that they might, having

this life from the dead, and this inward spirit of life, serve the living God : the living God requires a living service, performed according to the light of God, and according to that measure of his love shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. The experience of such is beautifully sung by the poet :

“ *New light new love, new love new life hath bred ;  
A life that lives by love, and loves by light :  
A love to HIM, to whom all loves are wed ;  
A light to which the sunne is dark as night :  
Eye’s light, heart’s love, soul’s only life He is :  
Life, soul, love, heart, light, eye, and all, are his :  
He eye, light, heart, love, soul ; HE all my joy and blisse !*

FLETCHER’S *Purple Island* : Canto I. stanza 7.

Heathens offered sacrifices, made vows, did services, and expected rewards from dead gods, idols of stone, wood, metal, clay, &c. : gods who had ears, but could not hear ; eyes, but could not see ; tongues, but could not speak—wholly inanimate, and at best, only representations of dead men, or of non-entities, or of devils. Stones, trees, fountains, rivers, woods, mountains, the sun, moon, planets, and stars, were objects of worship among the nations of the earth ; and into this absurd worship of dead things the Jews frequently relapsed, and followed the abominations of the heathens. The apostle here shows what the true worship is : its object is the true and living God ; its grand rite is the true sacrifice, the passion and death of the Lord Jesus. It is performed by the influence of the Eternal Spirit ; and its end is the purgation of the conscience from the stains contracted by the dead works above mentioned ; and the purification of the heart, that the living God might have a living service ; and that those who thus served him might have spiritual life in the work ; and this is agreeable to the exhortation of the apostle to the Romans,

chap. xii. 1 : "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Such a service is as rational as it is divine. The living only can show forth the praise of, and render service to, the living God. And the true worshipper lives by his religious service ; for, by these things do men live ; and in all these, is the life of the spirit ; and this is agreeable to the gracious declaration of God himself, "Your hearts shall live who seek the Lord," Ps. lxxix. 32, Amos v. 4. "I LIVE," says the apostle ; "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ; and the LIFE that I now LIVE, I LIVE by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me," Gal. ii. 20. The true believer lives to his God ; and genuine Christianity is the LIFE of God in the soul of man : and because Christ died for man and rose again, therefore, "they which live should not live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again," 2 Cor. v. 15. And true Christians can say, "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord : whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's," Rom. xiv. 8. Nothing can be more high, nothing more noble, nothing more glorious, than this CALLING : well may those who have got into it, "heartily thank their heavenly Father, that he hath called them into this STATE of SALVATION through Jesus Christ their Saviour ; and pray to God to give them grace that they may continue in the same unto their life's end."

From all this we learn, that a genuine Christian has a right creed and a right conduct. That he hears, that he may learn ; that he learns, that he may believe ; that he believes, in order to be saved ; that he receives salvation, in order that he may show forth the virtues of him who has called him from darkness into his marvellous

light : and that he walks in the light, bringing forth the fruits of righteousness unto the glory and praise of God, that he may be prepared for the kingdom of glory ; and, having overcome all enemies and all difficulties, through the blood of the Lamb, he may sit down with Christ on his throne, as he, having overcome, is sat down with the Father on the Father's throne. May this be the happy lot of every reader, for Christ's sake ! Amen, so be it, Lord Jesus !

## SERMON XXVII.

### THE PRAYER OF AGUR.

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PROVERBS XXX. 1—9.

1—6. “The words of Agur, the son of Jakeh, &c.

7. “Two *things* have I required of thee; deny me *them* not before I die :

8. “Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches : feed me with food convenient for me :

9. “Lest I be full, and deny *thee*, and say, Who is the Lord ? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God *in vain*.”

I SHALL first consider the short history which Agur gives of himself : secondly, his discourse concerning God and his word : and thirdly, examine his prayer, and the import of the different parts.

I. The history which Agur gives of himself.

This occurs in the first, second, and third verses.

Ver. 1. “The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, the prophecy the man spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal.”

The first sentence, “The words of Agur, the son of Jakeh,” has been supposed to be the title given to the succeeding words : so in my old MS. English Bible—~~The wordes of the gederer, sone bompteringe,~~—and then the chapter begins, ~~The viston that a man spake,~~ &c.

Coverdale makes this clause a regular heading to the chapter, “The wordes of Agur the sonne of Jake,” in his

Bible, fol., printed 1535 : likewise in the Bible of Thomas Matthew, printed 1537—"The wordes of Agur the sonne of Jaketh." And nearly the same in Edmund Beck's Bible, dedicated to EDWARD VI., and printed in 1549,—“The wordes of Agur the sunne of Jakeh :” and so in the Syriac Version. But they make a part of the first verse in Richard Cardmarden's Bible, printed at Rouen, in 1566 : and so in King James's Bible, 1611 ; in the Geneva Bible, by Barker, 4to, 1613 ; and in all others since that time.

But the words Agur, Jakeh, Ithiel, and Ucal, have been considered by some as proper names ; by others, who have translated literally, as expressing qualities, or descriptive characters. With some, Agur is Solomon ; and of course, Jakeh, DAVID ; and ITHIEL and UCAL, epithets of CHRIST ! Others think that Agur may here be considered a rabbin or public teacher ; and Ithiel and Ucal, two of his disciples.

In some of the ancient Versions the words are omitted ; in others, they are retained, partly as proper names, and partly as epithets. The Vulgate only has translated all literally, *Verba congregantis filii Vomentis : viris quam locutus est vir cum quo est Deus, et qui Deo secum morante confortatus, ait*, “The words of the collector, the son of the Vomiter : the vision which the man spake with whom is God, and who is comforted by God dwelling with him, saith.” Now this is a meaning of the Hebrew : but a very little reflection might have given St. Jerome, the translator, to discern, that such a translation could never have been intended ; because he is obliged to have recourse to allegory and metaphor, in order to explain it. The collector (Agur), with him, is the preacher of the gospel (the Ecclesiastes, he who calls the people together) ; for the church is termed the assembly or congregation, *Ecclesia* : and as the father of this



collector or Christian minister is called the Vomiter (Jakeh), it may refer to David, who, in Ps. xli. 1 (made concerning his son Solomon), begins with, "My heart is inditing (i. e., belching up) a good matter," &c. The Christian minister dwells by communion with God, (Ithiel), and God dwells by inspiration with him, giving him strength (Ucal) ; without which no man can understand the spiritual meaning of God's words, but will interpret them literally, or according to the flesh, &c. Now all this has a show of piety, but in the meantime where is the true interpretation of the words of God ? Could he ever have given a revelation that was to be thus interpreted ; where the imagination, caprice, prejudice, and even the ignorance and nonsense of man may have equal right to propose spiritual meanings ? The world has been long enough amused, and the church of God disgraced, by such interpretations ; and religion itself has fallen with many into contempt, on this very account. No wonder that, on the erection of a certain academical building, where all the arts, sciences, ancient languages, and even trades were to have their respective professors, Christianity was proscribed, "because," said the superficial directors, "we will have no professor of Christianity, till we know what Christianity is !" And yet Christianity, taken from the Scriptures themselves, is as easily ascertained as the science of geometry is from the elements of Euclid. This was thought a fine saying, was applauded, and the negative on such a professorship carried by acclamation. Poor souls ! how contemptible must they have appeared to even a boy in the first forms, who had read his Bible with suppose no more attention than they were accustomed to peruse the contents of a play-bill ! For the present, peace be with such dispassionate and able judges ! we may meet them again, when they venture next into day-light.

To return : were we to translate every word here, the whole might be thus rendered, keeping close enough to the letter.

“The words of the epistle of the obedient son ;” or, “the words of the collector the son of Jakeh ; the parable which the mighty man or hero (הגבר *hageber*), spake unto him who is God with me : to him who is God with me, even the strong God :” or, as my old MS. reads, which follows the Vulgate, *The vision that a man spake, with which is God, and that God with him wongng, comforted :*” or as Coverdale, who is more paraphrastic, “The prophecie of a true faithful man, whom God hath helped, whom God hath comforted and nourished.”

From this introduction, from the names here used, and from the style of this chapter, compared with the other parts of the book, it appears evident that Solomon was not the author of this prophecy ; and that it was designed to be distinguished from his work by this very preface, by which the difference is clearly marked : nor can the words in which the author professes his ignorance, and want of instruction in divine mysteries (verses second, third, eighth, and ninth) be at all applied to Solomon : they suit no part of Solomon’s life, nor of his circumstances ; at least previously to his most shameful apostasy, from which we have no evidence that he was ever restored.

We must therefore consider, “the words of Agur, son of Jakeh,” as an appendix or supplement to the preceding collection, similar to that which it is said the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, had made. As to the names Agur, Jakeh, Ithiel, and Ucal, I take them to be those of persons who did really exist, who are nowhere else distinctly mentioned in the Scriptures, and of whom we know nothing but what is mentioned here. I incline to the opinion that Agur was some public teacher ; that

Ithiel and Ucal were his scholars ; and that what he delivers to them here was through the spirit of prophecy, and was what the prophets generally term *נשא massa*, an oracle, something sent immediately from God for the instruction of man.

This Agur seems strongly to intimate himself, speaking in relation to what he delivers here : “ Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man,” ver. 2. We have made this concession of Agur unnecessarily strong, *כִּי בֵּעַר אֲנֹכִי מֵאִישׁ ki baar anoki me-ish*, “ For I am a boor, a rustic uneducated, when compared with great men and scholars,”—*וְלֹא בִינַת אָדָם לִי velo binath adam li*, “ nor is there to me the understanding of Adam.” I have neither intuitive nor acquired knowledge. These words can be in no sense true of Solomon ; for while he was the wisest of men, he could not have said, as we translate, he was “ more brutish than any man, and had not the understanding of a man :” rather may Agur be supposed to speak here in direct reference to Solomon the wise, and Adam the perfect.

It is vain for those who understand by Agur, Solomon, to say, that he “ was more brutish and senseless than any man, independently of divine teaching !” Had *he* said so, even by the slightest inuendo, it might be legitimate ; but he does not ; nor is it by fair implication to be understood. If he could have been proved to have written this chapter after his apostasy from God, then indeed he might say, he had been “ more brutish than any man, and was destitute of the understanding of a man ;” but this is neither proved nor pretended. Agur might have used these words according to the sense I have given them, for aught we know : for it is very probable that he was a rustic, without any regular education, as was the case with the prophet Amos, who tells us that he was not the

son of a prophet, not brought up in any of their schools, but was “one of the herdsmen of Tekoa, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit,” chap. i. 7—14,—but “the Lord took him as he was following the flock,” ver. 15 ; thus Agur intimates that all he knew now was by the inspiration of the Almighty, independently of which he was an uneducated rustic. Hence, in ver. 3, he says, “I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.” The prophets and wise men, we know, had public schools, and their disciples were called sons of the prophets ; but he had never been brought up in these, nor was he acquainted with any eminent men—those who are probably meant here by קדושים *kedoshim*, *saints*, *holy persons*.

The Septuagint translates this verse differently “θεος δέδιδάχῃ με σοφίαν, καὶ γινώσκω ἁγίων ἐγνώκα· God hath taught me wisdom, and the science of the holy ones I have known.” This may refer to the patriarchs, prophets, or holy men, who flourished before the days of Solomon ; and these the Septuagint might have had in view. My old MS. Bible translates thus : *I lerned not wisdom, and I knew the kunnyng of saints.* *Kunynyge* signifies science or knowledge. Coverdale paraphrases, rather than translates, this and the preceding verses conjointly—“For though I am the least of all, and have no man’s understandynge (for I never lerned wissdom), yet have I understandinges and am wel enfourmed in godly thinges.” This amounts to what has already been said : and to what St. Paul says of himself and his own acquirements, in order that he might magnify the grace of his Lord : “Christ sent me to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect,” 1 Cor. i. 17. “I came to you, not with excellency of speech or of wisdom.” “We have received

that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God ; which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth," 1 Cor. ii. 1, 12, 13. "For though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge," 2 Cor. xi. 6; as if he had said, "Though with you I pass for a rustic, *ιδιωτης*, *unlettered man*, not adorning my preaching with fine rhetorical touches, yet I speak the wisdom which the Holy Spirit of God teaches." This is, in fact, what Agur says of himself: "Though I have nothing from man, I have much from God."

And having disclaimed all human teaching and earthly advantages, he comes, *Secondly*, to discourse in the highest manner concerning the Divine nature, God's government of the world, and the revelation he has given to man.

And First, he calls upon his hearers to show any man who had by human learning, study, or science, found out the knowledge of God, his ways, or his works:—

1. *Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended?* As if he had said, "I have not the knowledge of the holy ones—for how could I acquire it? Who is he who could attain to that? Have any of you ascended to heaven, to learn that science? And who among you has descended, in order to publish it? Is the science of salvation one of those things which can be apprehended by study? Is it not a free gift of the mercy of God?"—Moses, after having shown to the people the will of God, said: "This commandment which I command thee this day, is not hidden from thee; neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, in order to bring it to us, that we may hear and do it?" Deut. xxx. 11, 12. "Who hath gathered the wind in his fists?" It is as difficult for a mortal man to acquire this divine science by his own

reason and strength, as to collect all the winds of heaven in his fists; and who can command the spirit of prophecy, that he may prophesy when he pleases? What I am about to speak comes from him who is perfect wisdom and unlimited power. He alone hath bound the waters in a garment; -He alone hath established all the ends of the earth—What is his name? what is his son's name? Canst thou tell? Show me the nature of this Supreme Being! Point out his eternity; his omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence; his mode of sustaining and governing all things! Comprehend and describe him if thou canst—he will teach *as* he pleases; he will teach by *whom* he pleases. “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings he hath ordained strength.” These are mysteries which ye cannot unfold—depths which ye cannot fathom—heights to which ye cannot ascend. Be content to know him as your Instructor, to feel him as your Saviour, to adore him as your God and your Preserver.

The words, *What is his son's name*, some copies of the Septuagint translate, *η τι ονομα τοις τεκνοις*, or *what is the name of his sons?* But in the commencement of this chapter, this ancient Version is all confusion. Many are of opinion that Agur refers here to the first and second persons of the ever-blessed TRINITY. It may be so: but who would rest the proof of that most glorious doctrine upon such a text?—to say nothing of the obscure author, of whom we know nothing but what he says here of himself. Though this doctrine be true, sublimely true, yet it (like many other sublime doctrines) has suffered much in controversy, by having improper or dubious texts urged in its favour. Every lover of God and truth should be choice in his selections, when he comes before the public in behalf of the more mysterious doctrines of the Bible. Nothing should be alleged in reference to the point that

is not clear,—nothing that does not pointedly apply. The man who is obliged to spend a world of critical labour to establish the sense in which a text is to be understood, which he intends to allege in favour of a doctrine which he designs to support, may rest assured that he goes the wrong way to work. Those who injudiciously or incautiously amass every text of Scripture which they think bears upon the subject they defend, often give their adversaries great advantage against them. We may every day see many a sacred and important doctrine suffer, through the bad judgment of its friends. The Godhead of Christ, salvation by faith, the great atoning sacrifice, and other essential doctrines of this class, have suffered much and are still suffering in this way. When the truth is assailed by all kinds of weapons, handled by insidious cunning, and powerful foes, its injudicious defenders may be ranked among its enemies. To such I hope without offence, I may say, “Keep your cabins ; you do assist the STORM.”

2. Agur, having stated that he made no pretensions to any extraordinary knowledge, and shown that he had not even the advantages of education, and that God could be known only by a revelation from himself ; proceeds to draw the attention of his pupils to one of the essential properties of that revelation—the necessity and advantage of faith in God, and the danger of corrupting his words by pretending a divine authority to make additions to them ; and in stating these things he shows what care and caution he had used in his intercourse with God, to report only what he had learned from him ; and that therefore the prophecy which he was about to deliver might be confidently received as a communication from the Most High.

*Every word of God is pure.* The original is very emphatic, and should be carefully noticed, כל אמרת אלה צרופה

*kol imroth Eloah tseruphah*, “every oracle of God is purified ;” a metaphor taken from metals, everything that God has pronounced, every law he has enacted, every inspiration which the prophets have received, is pure truth, without mixture of falsity or error—there is no dross in it. It is like pure gold, in which no trial by fire can detect any alloy or base mixture ; whatever trials the truth of God has been exposed to, it always, like gold, bears the fire, losing neither weight, nor value, nor splendour, by its action. This meaning of the original is expressed with sententious brevity in my old MS. Bible, *Ecce sermon of good is fired, that is, tried, as by fire ;* men and devils, friends and foes, various circumstances, the changes and chances of life ; and even the providence of God, have contributed to try the truth, fidelity, purity, and unfailing nature of the oracles of God. They are all yea, all amen ; every word seems to say, “He is faithful who has promised, and will also do it.” And as that word represents God as the Saviour and Protector of men, Agur adds on this head what he appears to have had immediately by divine inspiration, “He is a shield unto them that put their trust in him,” which words are very emphatic in themselves ; and peculiarly so in some Versions and many ancient MSS. which read thus : instead of *לחסים lechosim*, to them that trust, they read “he is the defence (*לכל לחסים bo lecol lechosim*) to all,” or “to every one of those who trust in him.” His faithful followers may have many adversaries, but they have no cause for fear ; for as a shield protects the body from shots and thrusts—from the sword and the poisoned arrow ; so God protects them from all the fiery darts of the wicked one. His truth is their shield and buckler. But as it is the shield of faith that quenches all the fiery darts, so the defence is promised to them that trust in



him—to them who take God at his word, knowing that he can neither fail nor deceive.

Man, though considered the lord of the earth, is the object of more persecution than any other creature. Ever since his fall, that carnal mind which is enmity against God excites him to acts of hostility against his fellows ; hence the wars and fightings which have swept so many millions from the face of the earth. But they who live a godly life, according to the Christian system, must suffer persecution ; against these the natural enmity takes a more studied and determined aim : hence have proceeded all the persecutions which have been raised up against the Christian church, and by which so many have perished, both in ancient, and even in comparatively modern times. Add to all these that *contention* of which the apostle speaks, Eph. vi. 12, “Against angels, principalities, and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickednesses in high places.” And we are warned against the incessant attacks of “our adversary the devil, who goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” These make fearful odds against him. Now, all these things considered, what need is there of the divine protection ! It is God alone that can shield us from such dangers. The power of man is a sorry defence against diabolic might ; and his skill and art are straw and stubble against Satanic cunning, and the wiles of the devil. In no time, place, nor circumstance, is man secure ; and because these animals are spiritual, malevolent, and unseen, therefore are they the more dangerous. Yet here is a promise of sure defence ; but the promise is to them that trust in him—to all believers. Those who do not confide in him are not entitled to protection. Is it not strange, when man’s circumstances and danger are con-

sidered, that faith should be so little in action—that it is not one of the most popular, so to speak, of all the Christian graces! And is it not one of the wiles of the devil, that persuades him that the exercise of this grace is the most difficult of all, and in short almost impossible without a miraculous power? hence the saying, “We can no more believe than we can make a world.” It is readily granted, that without God we can do nothing; but as he gives us power to discern, to repent, to hope, to love, and to obey, so does he give us power to believe—and to us the use or exercise of the power belongs. He does not discern, repent, hope, love, or obey for us; no more than he believes for us;—by using the grace he gives, we discern, repent, hope, believe, love, and obey. Without the grace we can do nothing; without the careful use of the grace, the grace profits us nothing. To every prescribed duty God furnishes the requisite grace. The help is ever at hand, but we are “not workers together with him;” hence we are in general “receiving the grace of God in vain;” and to excuse our negligence, indolence, and infidelity, we cry out, “We can do nothing!”—“We have no strength!”—“We can no more believe than we can make a world!” Our adversary knows well how to take advantage of such sayings—and indeed they are issues of his own temptations; therefore it is his business to persuade us that these are all incontrovertible truths! How strange, how disgraceful is it, that the words of the devil, and the wicked words of a lying world, and the antinomian maxims of fallen churches, or fallen Christians, should be implicitly believed, while the words of the living God are not credited! He commands us to believe—reproaches us for our unbelief, tells us that if we believe not we shall not be established—asserts that he who believes not has made God a liar—proclaims salvation by faith—and

finishes the confutation of our infidel speeches with, "He that believeth not, shall be damned." Now, all this supposes that he gives us the strength, and that we do not use it. Whose word so credible as the word of God? and whose word has less credence? Many are volunteers in faith, where there is no promise; for they can believe that we cannot be saved from all sin in this life—that we shall be saved in the article of death—and that there is a purgatorial middle state, where we may be cleansed by penal fire, from vices that the blood of Jesus either could not or did not purge; and that the Almighty Spirit of judgment and burning did not or could not consume; and where there are exceeding great and precious promises, which in God are *yea*, and in CHRIST, *amen*, they can scarcely credit any thing! How abominable is this conduct! How insulting to God! How destructive to the soul! No wonder that many of our old and best writers have declaimed so much against this, calling unbelief *the damning sin*, by way of eminence, and that which *binds all other sins upon the soul*. Men may treat the word of God as they list, but these truths of God shall endure for ever: "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned;" and, "He is a shield unto all them that put their trust in him."

To prevent men from making creeds and confessions of faith for themselves, ecclesiastical customs, &c., of materials which God has not furnished, the prophet gives this caution, "Add not thou unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar," ver. 6. The wise man may have his metaphor, of gold tried in the furnace, still in view; as if he had said, "You can no more add to the value of these words of the Most High by any human additions, than you can add to the value of gold by mixing other metals with it." He adds to

God's words who brings in spurious gospels, which abounded in the early ages of Christianity; and they who bring in traditions, i. e., things and doctrines which have been delivered down from hand to hand, from unknown or dubious authority, claiming not only the right to give particular illustrations of Scripture or scriptural doctrines, so as to bring in peculiar customs, but to supersede positive Scripture testimony relative to the customs, doctrines, and practice of the primitive church, such as purgatory, sacrifices and prayers for the dead, invocation of saints and angels, transubstantiation, omission of the cup in the Lord's Supper, priestly absolution, auricular confession, monastic institutions and orders, papal vicarage as proceeding from Christ, and image-worship, with the long bead-roll of legends which pollute the words of God, as they encumber and disgrace the churches professing Christianity which hold them.

Whatever is not plainly enjoined, whether in doctrine or practice, in the sacred writings, as essential to or forming a part of genuine Christianity, is an addition to the words of God, and to be held in universal abhorrence; for none of these can be produced by plain testimony or rational deduction, from the Hebrew of the Old or the Greek of the New Testament; therefore no opinions, of fathers or doctors, no decisions of popes or councils, should be received in reference to the doctrines which a Christian church should hold, or the discipline which a Christian church should administer. All such things are additions to the words of God, which, as a refuge of lies, God will sweep away from the face of the earth, as he has already from several of the kingdoms and states of Christendom. The wise man gives this caution to such churches and people, "lest," says he, "he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar;" the allusion to the purification of metals is still

carried on—lest he try thy words by fire, as his words have been tried ; and it appears that, far from abiding the test, the fire shows yours to be reprobate silver ; and so thou be found a falsifier of God's word, and a liar. How amply has this been fulfilled in the case of the Romish church ! It has added all the gross stuff in the Apocrypha, besides innumerable legends and traditions, to the words of God. They have been tried by the refiner's fire ; and this church has been reprov'd and found to be a liar, in attempting to affiliate on the Most Holy God spurious writings, alien from the dignity of his word, and discreditable to his nature.

A caution similar to this of Agur may be found in the Book of the Apocalypse, chap. xxii. 18, 19 : "I testify unto every man who heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this Book." These are awful words. If any man, or number of men, shall make any addition to the canon of Scripture, or give, as the mind of God, any other meaning to any portion of his book than that which he designs ; on him God will inflict the curses threatened in his word : and if he or they take away, cut off books, chapters, verses, or words from that book—endeavour to lessen their meaning, curtail their sense, or explain away the spirit or design of his laws, gospels, commandments, or precepts—he shall forfeit all his rights, titles, and privileges ; in a word, his hopes and his final salvation ; because he has dared to take away from the integrity of the revelation of God. Reader, take heed that thou do **not** anything which this word *forbids*, nor leave undone

anything that it *commands*; for this is adding and diminishing, according to the use and meaning of such words in Scripture.

III. Having considered what this prophet says concerning GOD and his WORD, I come now to consider in the *third* place his prayer to God, and the use we should make of it.

“Two things,” says he, addressing his Maker, “have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die.” It is not now that Agur for the first time begins to pray. The petitions included in this prayer he had desired of God; he no doubt had often prayed for the same things; they had been objects of his desire; and, as being necessary to his well-being, he had humbly required them from his gracious Creator. Whatever we need, we may ask of God; and whatever he has promised we may ask confidently, for God binds himself graciously to fulfil all his promises to his followers. “Deny me them not before I die.” To his petitions he wishes an answer *now*, that he may spend the rest of his life in the state he describes; for we are not to suppose that such a prayer as this could be offered up by any person who felt himself on the verge of the grave; it would rather appear that he was now entering upon public life, with a deep sense of his accountableness, and the dangers to which he was likely to be exposed in transacting the business of that station which the Divine Providence might assign him. The conduct of this man may afford lessons of prudence, piety, and caution, to all who are entering on the concerns of life, who wish to pass through them creditably, and who are properly sensible that this would be impossible without the blessing and direction of that God who is the Author and Dispenser of every good and perfect gift.

The text says, Agur asked two things from God; but

there appear to be three mentioned : 1. Remove far from me vanity and lies ; 2. Give me neither poverty nor riches ; 3. Feed me with food convenient for me. But as the first seems to refer wholly to religious matters, and the two latter to the concerns of this life, and these constitute the essence of his prayer, the first article does not seem to be necessarily included in the prayer.

From the import of the original words שׁוּא *shavé* and כֹּזֶב *cazab*, which we translate *vanity* and *lies*, I am satisfied that Agur prays against *idolatry*, *false religion*, and *false worship* of every kind, and is here to be understood as expressing his faith, the purity of his motives, and his sole dependance on the true God, to whom he is about to address himself for those things necessary for his comfort, and safety, and life. The word שׁוּא *shavé* is used for an *idol* or *false god*, Jer. xviii. 15, “My people have forsaken me, and burnt incense to VANITY,” לְשׁוּא *leshavé*, to an IDOL. Ps. xxxi. 6, “I hate them that regard lying VANITIES,” שׁוּא הַבִּלִּי *habeley shavé*, vain IDOLS. See also Hos. xii. 11, “Is there iniquity in Gilead ? surely they are VANITY, they sacrifice bullocks in Gilgal ; yea, their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the field.” The prophet here states that Gilead and Gilgal were equally iniquitous, and equally idolatrous—their idolatry was universal ; and their altars, the proof of it, were to be met with everywhere. The prophet Jonah, chap. ii. 8, uses the word in the same sense, “They that observe lying VANITIES forsake their own mercy.” That is, they that trust in idols, follow vain predictions, and permit themselves to be influenced by foolish fears, so as to induce them to leave the path of obvious duty—“forsake their own mercy,” in leaving that God who is the Fountain of mercy : but, says the prophet, “I will sacrifice to THEE.”

The word כֹּזֶב *cazab*, which signifies a thing that *fails*

or *deceives*, may well apply to the vain pretensions, false promises, and deceptive religious rites of idolatry; so Jer. xv. 18, “Wilt thou be unto me as a liar,” כִּמוֹ אֲכֹזֵב *kemo acazob*—like the false failing promises of the false gods; “and as waters that fail,” לֹא נֶאֱמָנוּ *lo nēmenu*, that are not faithful—not like the true God, whose promises never fail? According to this view of the subject, Agur prays, 1. That he may be preserved from idolatry; 2. That he may put no confidence in any words but those pure words of God, that never fail them who put their trust in him. In a general way the words of the text may refer, 1. שָׁוֵא *shavé*, to all false shows, all false appearances of happiness, every vain expectation; let me never set my heart on anything that is not solid, true, durable, and eternal. 2. *Lies*, דִּבְרֵי כֹזֵב *dibrey kazab*, all words of deception, empty pretensions, false promises, uncertain dependencies, and words that fail; promises which, when they become due, are like bad bills, they are dishonoured, because found to be forged, or the drawer insolvent.

It is right that in our addresses to God we should have a proper view of the benevolence of his nature, and the truth of his word; that we neither have self-dependance, nor false dependance; that we trust nothing to fortune, chance, or speculation; for all these are as deceptive as idolatry, and confidence in them as criminal; and that, with a clear conscience, we can approach our Maker, and declare our determination, by his help, to avoid every false way, and use no unfair, deceitful, or knavish mode in the conducting of our business or trade, or in transacting our temporal concerns with men.

These matters being settled, Agur prefers his two petitions.

1. “Give me neither poverty nor riches.” This petition consists of two parts: 1. Give me not poverty; 2.



Give me not riches: and for each of these he gives a reason.

The word which we translate *poverty*, ראש *res* or *resh*, has a great variety of meanings in the Bible. It signifies head, chief, top—the first or chief of a kind,—a captain, a full sum in accounts, poison, gall, deadly poison, i. e., the chief of deleterious plants, or that of the most venomous animals,—the head of a river,—a spring,—poverty, extreme poverty or indigence. In short, it gives the idea of precedence and priority wherever it is used; but in this place, and in chap. vi. 11, it signifies overwhelming poverty. “So shall thy poverty come in as one that travaileth, and thy want as an armed man.” As we proceed, we shall see what connexion on this subject some of the several meanings of the word ראש *res* have with the root ראש *raash*, which is composed of the same letters, and only differs in its various acceptations by means of the vowel points. The word *poverty* we borrow from the French *pauvreté*; which the grand dictionary of the Academy defines thus: Indigence, manque de biens, manque de choses nécessaires a la vie.—“Indigence, want of substance, want of the things necessary for life.” And in the same work, *pauvre*, a *poor man*, is defined, Un mendicant; un homme qui est véritablement dans le besoin,—“A beggar; a man who is really in want;” no fictitious complainer; one who has not the necessities of life, and therefore must perish, if not relieved by the benevolence of others;—hence he is obliged to become wholly dependant on others, and beg from door to door for bread and raiment to prevent him from perishing. This idea has very properly occurred to the translator of my old MS. Bible: Two thingis I preyede to thee, ne denye thou to me er I die. Vanyte and lesinge wordus fer do awaye fro me; beggri and richessis ne gebe thou to me. Against beggary, or the state of absolute

dependance, he prays, as the most uncertain in its produce, as the most uncomfortable to the body, and the most ruinous to that state of mental independence which God has given to every man ; and without which man is capable of any villany. The poor laws in this country, though well designed in the beginning, have been totally subversive of this spirit among the lower classes in the nation, on account of the successive and now incurable abuses that have crept in by them. That nervous, independant spirit which the British yeomanry possessed in days of yore, is nearly extinct. The profligate and the careless, the man who no longer wishes to work to maintain himself and his family, sees he can claim parish pay ; and when he claims admittance into the poor-house, as he must give up what he has in order to enter there, will expend his last shilling, sell off, by slow degrees, his furniture ; and when he is to be received, is known to have sold his clothes, his bed, his pan, and his last chair, the price of which he has expended on wants created by idleness, indulged under the conviction of the certainty of obtaining parish supply ; and probably the public-house, the nursery of sin, has previously had one half of the price obtained for those articles. To the unacquainted with such cases, which are sufficiently numerous, such a case appears most pitiable ; for, say they, “the family was found destitute of everything, and ready to perish.” I venture to state, that had it not been for the beggarliness of spirit, induced by the poor laws, there would not have been one out of 500 cases of this kind ever found in the nation.

Had such a man as Agur lived in our time, with such a spirit of independence as he enjoyed, he would have entered this in his prayer, as a reason why God should hear him : “Lest I should be tempted to claim relief from the parish, while able to earn my bread ; and lay

down for ever at the threshold of the poor-house that independency of spirit with which thou hast endowed me ; and thus become capable of every evil work."

*Poverty* has been divided into two parts, one *relative*, the other *absolute*. 1. *Relative* poverty ; the state in which a man has but little ; has many wants, and but few supplies ; is often pinched, and always straitened ; and is in such circumstances, that he cannot relieve himself, and has no prospect of any amelioration of his condition. 2. *Absolute* poverty ; the state in which a man has neither food, raiment, nor clothes, and can earn none, either through total want of employ, or through disease, which has completely prostrated his strength.

Relative poverty possesses a little ; but that little in many cases insufficient for the support of life.

Absolute poverty possesses nothing, and has no prospect of a change of that condition. Against these the prophet prays, "Give me not poverty ;" for which he adds the reason, "Lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain."

"Lest I become poor," פֶּן אֲרֵשׁ *pen ivaresh*, lest, reduced to absolute poverty, and knowing no quarter from which I can obtain lawful help, I steal ; and thus supply my pressing wants with my neighbour's property. My old MS. translates emphatically : *And thurg neede constrained stell ; and so forswere the name of my God*. This clause is variously translated and understood. The Versions in general translate as we do, or, rather, our translators follow them ; and "forswear the name of the Lord" is the general sense given to the words ; i. e., having fallen into poverty, and having, in consequence of distrusting the Lord, put forth my hand and taken my neighbour's goods, and in order to hide, cover, vindicate, or excuse my conduct, have sworn to my own innocence, or pleaded such pressing evils as left me no alternative but either

to steal or perish. The original תפשתי *taphasti*, “I catch at” the name of my God—lay violent hold upon it; as many do, who, reduced to their last shifts by overpowering testimony brought against them, swear the more earnestly and the more bitterly, either that they are innocent, or that they took what they did to save them from death; and thus, to cover one sin, bring forward another. Among the Jews, a man suspected of theft was permitted to purge himself by an oath; and the accuser was obliged to accept of this oath, as a full proof that the accused was innocent. See Exod. xxii. 11. To a false oath, taken in this way, Agur doubtless refers. Swearing and lying are frequently brought forward to cover fraud and deceit. Let us show as much mercy as we can in such cases as these; I have known many decent, respectable people, who feared a lie and trembled at an oath, who, when brought either by failure of trade, sudden fall of some article of commerce, speculation in business, through the hope of what they considered honest gain, by which they might be enabled to pay every man his due,—were led to forge bills, borrow money, impose upon even their own relations, cover one bad bill with another as bad, hoping that ere the time of payment they might, by the speculations or promises that were still in abeyance, be able to pay every one his due. Now here is the temptation, and here is the reason for the prayer: that, had they not been brought into this state of pressing poverty, they would never have resorted to those exceptionable means, and what is called dirty shifts, and tricking conduct. Reader, if thou be a man in business or trade, and art about to be straitened in thy circumstances, pray most fervently to God that thou mayest not fall into abject poverty, lest thou complete thy wretchedness by lying, cheating, false promising, false swearing, and other dirty acts; by which many,

once respectable, honest, and upright, have been drowned in destruction of property, and perdition of character and life;—and so the Lord have mercy on thy soul! It was the knowledge I have acquired of men and things, in the course of my long passage through life, that first brought me to form the purpose of writing a discourse on the prayer of Agur.

2. But he seems to pray as earnestly against *riches* as against *poverty*. “Give me not riches:” אֲשֶׁר *asher* signifies opulence, or abundant property of any kind; as, independently of the vowel points, it is composed of the same letters as אֲשֶׁר *eser*, *ten*, it is supposed by some able Hebraists to be derived from this latter; ten being the rich number, including all units under it. No nation seems to have a higher numerical denomination than ten; and as it includes the whole of the units, by combinations of which the greatest possible computations are made; so *asher* may be taken to express all those goods, property, wealth, &c., of every kind that constitute riches or abundance; so that the rich man is one who has all the necessities, all the conveniences, and all the comforts of this life; and these in the utmost enjoyable quantity. Higher than this is to be loaded, not enriched. For in these, all that is good or desirable is contained.

In vindication of deriving the Hebrew word אֲשֶׁר *asher*, *riches*, from the root אֲשֶׁר *eser*, *ten*, as the *rich* number, containing all the units, Mr. Parkhurst has the following note: “In like manner, the etymologists derive the Greek δέκα, *ten* (whence the Latin *decem*, *ten*, and English *decimate* and *decimation*), from δεχέσθαι (Ionic δεκεσθαι), because it contains all numbers. And are not the Latin *teneo*, and the French *tenir*, to *hold* (whence *contenir*, and the English *contain*), and the English *ten*, all derived from the same origin? In an ancient language, contain-

ing little else than simple terms, and where each must admit of as many shades of meaning as might be sufficient to denominate other things, as far as they could be referred to the ideal meaning of the primitive root; it is not to be wondered at that the term in question, for the reasons above mentioned, might be used, with different vocal sounds appended to the letters, to express ten, tenth; tithe, a measure of capacity, that held the tenth part of an ephah; an instrument of music, the esur, that was capable of expressing all kinds of notes on its *ten* strings;—to express riches, opulence, abundance. And hence, perhaps the sun, which in Egypt was termed *Osiris*, עשיר the enricher; as the sun, by his light and heat, was the means of life and fructification to universal nature; and hence the treasures of the earth.”

As the word עשיר *eser*, *riches*, is opposed to רעש *res*, *poverty*, and both words seem to be taken in their utmost significations, we may conceive that Agur’s prayer had for its object both extremes—let me neither be affluently rich, nor miserably poor; and this is sufficiently evident from the middle state (and in which there are gradations, verging upon comparative poverty on the one hand, and comparative riches on the other), which he here specifies, “Feed me with food convenient for me.” He believed that both extremes were equally unfriendly to religion and happiness; and I have had occasion to remark, in many thousands of cases, during the observations of a long life, made in various parts, that true religion makes as little way among the miserably poor as among the affluently rich. The former, full of unbelief, baseness of mind, and pining bitterness, neither pray to God, nor care to hear about the provision he has made for their salvation. The latter, full of sensuality, and pampered with the good things of this life, are only occupied with what they shall eat, what they shall drink, how they

shall amuse and sport themselves, and wherewithal they shall be clothed, according to the endless changes in fantastic, frippery fashions ; are too busy, or too brutally happy, to attend to the call of the gospel ; and because it would break in upon their gratifications, they hate religion, despise a crucified Saviour, and the men who proclaim salvation through his name alone.

Who has been ever able to spread religion with much success among the occupants of a parish workhouse ? Who, whatsoever his authority might be, or his qualifications, has been able to make many favourable impressions on the souls of mighty, and particularly rich and opulent men, so as to stem the torrent of fashionable impiety, and to establish among them the form, or if already established, imbue it with the power, of godliness ? A solitary example here and there, in the lapse of centuries of time, cannot overturn the fact : instances of real conversion are as rare among such persons as the black swan among birds. In short, the whole experience of the church of God, and the ministers of that church, goes to prove that it is the middle labouring classes in general who receive the truth in the love thereof, with gladness of heart ; and of those, mainly, is the visible church upon earth constituted. The *poverty* and *riches* men, in Agur's acceptation of those words, although they form two widely-different communities, in their social or earthly relations, make another kind of church, one and indivisible. They are not the living stones, instinct with the life and power of godliness, which are builded up for a habitation of God through the Spirit.

It must be granted, that there are conditions of life, some of which are favourable, others unfavourable, to a religious life ; but in all such cases there is sufficient help to be obtained from God, if it be earnestly sought. Where the faithful preaching of the pure gospel abounds,

there is every advantage, both to the poor and the rich. But none can calculate the disadvantages that they lie under, who are resident where the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, or where erroneous doctrines are preached ; or where the pure doctrine of salvation is not sufficiently preached, and pressed home on the consciences of the people.

If a person be in an unlawful calling, he cannot expect the blessing of God on his soul, whether he be rich or poor ; or if he be employed in a lawful business that is unlawfully pursued ; for instance, by the breach of the sabbath. There are many great men who do not know the truth, because their chaplains, &c., do not know the truth themselves ; and how, then, can they preach it ? or they are flattered in their vices ; or their easily besetting sins are not at all, or but tenderly touched.

Agricultural pursuits seem to possess every advantage for a religious life, and yet the rich pluralist farmers are often proverbially ungodly ; they feed themselves without fear, and do not cultivate their minds, and therefore do not obtain the wisdom that cometh from above. Of such, an ancient wise man thus speaks :

Τι σοφισθησεται ὁ κρατῶν ἀροτροῦ,  
Και κανχῶμενος ἐν ὁρατῇ κεντρῶν,  
Βοᾶς ἐλαυνῶν καὶ ἀναστρεφόμενος ἐν ἐργοῖς αὐτῶν,  
Καὶ ἡ διηγήσις αὐτοῦ ἐν υἱοῖς ταυρῶν  
Καρδίαν αὐτοῦ δώσει ἐκδύναι ἀνλακάς,  
Καὶ ἡ ἀργυπνία αὐτοῦ εἰς χορτάσματα δαμαλεῶν.

Σοφ. υἱοῦ Σιραχ ch. xxxviii. 25.

How can he get wisdom who holdeth the *plough*,  
And who glorieth in the spear of the *goad* ;  
Who driveth *oxen*, and is occupied in their labours,  
And whose conversation is about *calves* ?  
Who setteth his heart on the making of *furrows*,  
And his watchful cares on the *fattening of cows* ?



All these are important occupations : but what a pity that the whole heart should be set upon them ; that he who causeth the grass to grow for cattle, and the corn for the service of man, should be forgotten in those very circumstances where his power and his providence are most conspicuous !

The ardent pursuit of riches is as destructive as the possession of them is dangerous. The apostle says, "The love of money is the root of all evil ; which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. For they that WILL be RICH fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which draw men into destruction and perdition ;" 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. They will be rich ; and being so determined, they utterly forget God and their souls.

For his prayer against riches, Agur gives as good a reason as he does for that against poverty, "Lest I be full and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord?" My old MS. Bible is, as often is the case, emphatic here.: *Lest peradventure I fulfil'd, be drawen to denyen, and seyen, who is the Lord !* That is, lest, having all earthly things at command, I should gratify all my sensual desires, and thus, feeling no spiritual wants, be excited to deny that there is a God, and tauntingly and impudently call upon his followers to show him whom they call Lord. Coverdale expresses the pride and naughtiness of their heart in his translation, "Lest if I be to full, I denye the, and saye, what fellowe is the Lord?" The general meaning is, "Lest I be full, and addict myself to luxurious living, pamper the flesh, and starve the soul, and so deny thee, the Fountain of goodness ; and if called upon to resort to first principles, I say, who is Jehovah ? Why should I acknowledge, why should I serve him ? and thus cast aside all sense of religion, and all moral obligation."

But there is another clause that seems to make a separate prayer, though included in the preceding: “Feed me with food convenient for me;” expressed by three words in the original, *הַתְּרִיפֵנִי לֶחֶם חֻקִּי* *hateriphini lechem chukki*, the meaning of which appears to be, “give me, *as prey*, my statute allowance of bread.” The prayer of a hunter going out to the forest to seek for venison. “Thou knowest I need a certain portion of food for myself and family; so order it that I shall meet with such prey as may be both suitable and sufficient for my wants.” It is the same petition in sense and substance as that in our Lord’s prayer, *τον ἄρτον ἡμῶν τον ἐπιούσιον* *δος ἡμῖν σήμερον*, or *το καθ’ ἡμέραν*, “Give us to-day our sufficient portion of food;” or, “Give us each day our proper ration,”—what is sufficient for our daily consumption.

There was great moderation in the prayer of Agur, he wished merely for what was sufficient for the family support,—just what was needful, and this was what Providence seemed to prescribe; and therefore it is termed *חֻקִּי* *chukki*, my *statute* allowance; that which is marked out as necessary for the support of life; and this he asked not in advance, but day by day; and thus continual dependance on God, and continual gratitude for blessings daily received, were kept in full exercise.

This is a most lawful prayer; it can never be the design of God that any man shall perish through the want of the necessities of life. There is bread for all, furnished by Divine Providence; and work for all, by which they may acquire that bread; for it is in or by the sweat of the brow that a man shall eat bread. This was God’s original design; and hence the apostle strongly asserts, 2 Thess. iii. 10, that “they who will not work, shall not eat;” and hence he commands them, 1 Thess. iv. 11, “To study to be quiet, to do their own business,

and to work with their hands." The slothful man shall be clothed with rags ; nor is there anything in providence or in grace to entitle him to expect a subsistence if he labour not ; in Agur's prayer he can have no part. Riches in no sense can he have who will not work. Poverty and wretchedness must be his portion ; with the disapprobation of God, both in time and eternity. But God will bless the hand of the diligent ; and he may not only have enough, but something to spare. Reader, should God not only give thee the portion necessary for thee, but something more, remember, the poor are ever with thee ; turn not away thy face from any poor man ; and so the face of the Lord shall never be turned away from thee. Add to this, the consideration that God requires your help in behalf of his Church, and for the diffusion of his knowledge among the heathen. There are whole nations who have not heard of the Lord's Christ. You cannot get to them in person ; go then in proxy. There are many holy men who have in this way consecrated their service to the Lord, and wish to be sent to those countries, from which a voice is come to our ears, and to our hearts, *Come over and help us !* Send them as your proxies and representatives.

Let the rich, who do not wish that their table should become a snare to them, expend at least a part of their surplus in this way ; and this will be the means of getting the blessing of God on all the rest. Thus, between the poor, the church, and the heathen, there are so many open channels to take off all our superfluous cash ; and consequently so many means of conveying God's approbation and blessing to our hearts and families. Thus the rich man may join in Agur's prayer with great fervour and success, " Give me not riches, without giving me a heart to use them to thy glory and the good of mankind !" And thus, to use a plain term, that which

God has put into your hands, you will never put into your heart ; but will honour the Lord with your substance.

And now, ye poor, arise and shake yourselves from the dust, and cry unto the Lord. Has not your present wretchedness proceeded either from your slothfulness, or the abuse of mercies already received ? God may bring back your captivity ; search your hearts, humble yourselves before him,—who knows but he will return to you with mercies, and your expectation shall not perish for ever. He has promised “to deliver the needy when he crieth ; the poor also, and him that hath no helper ;” Ps. lxxii. 2. But remember, there is no promise of deliverance where there is no cry. If you call earnestly upon him, you will find the truth of this promise : “He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill ;” Ps. cxiii. 7.

In the preceding paraphrase on the short history and maxims of Agur, I have endeavoured to point out the snares and dangers incident to the principal states and situations of life, the imperfection of human knowledge, the danger of self-confidence and presumption ; the necessity of divine teaching, and of preservation from extremes, in reference to poverty on the one hand, and riches on the other ; the blessedness of a middle state in society ; the duties of the rich, the poor, and of those who occupy the middle place in reference to these two extremes ; and the necessity of faith in God, prayer to him, and contentment with the situation in which his wise providence has thought fit to place us.

The prayer of Agur has been frequently quoted by many who attended very little to its meaning, and whose hearts were strongly set upon gain ; who wished with all their souls to be as rich as the best of their neighbours, and who would have been glad to have been placed at

the head of the community : but as this was in most cases hopeless, they felt a desire to compound with providence ; and on condition that they were not to see poverty, but have all the necessities, conveniences, and comforts of life, they would have been contented to have given up what they conceived to be riches—the state of kings, great lords, affluent merchants, wealthy tradesmen, and extensive landholders ! For want of close self-examination we possess but little of self-knowledge, and often think we are very sincere, when in fact we are very ignorant of the import of our own requests, and sometimes even mean the contrary to what we express.

The sum of all is, God alone is the Fountain, Author, and Giver of all good. He loves man ; and if, while humble, teachable, and dependant on him, he earnestly and honestly put forth the powers which he has given him, steadily fleeing from sin to God his Saviour ; that saving and merciful God will bless him in his lawful endeavours, and enable him to owe no man anything, and to provide things honest in the sight of all men ; God will not very probably give him riches, but will save him from pinching poverty, and grant him the food or maintenance convenient or suitable to his state.

Whoever has received from God food, raiment, and a contented spirit, has received all that he should pray for, and all that any human being needs to make him truly happy. What is beyond this is generally an encumbrance, or a heavy charge intrusted to the possessor in behalf of the poor ; and he has much need to pray for grace from God to be faithful. He who prays for RICHES, prays for snares, vanity, and vexation of spirit. He who prays for POVERTY, prays for what few can bear ; and should his prayer be heard, and he become poor, he will most probably “steal, and take the name of the Lord in vain.” For where a prophet of God did

not feel himself safe, a common Christian would be very likely to fall.

Some pray for poverty of spirit—this is perhaps another word for humility; of this, no man can have too much. And some pray for the riches of grace and glory, by which they mean an abundance of faith, hope, and love. This should be the incessant prayer of every Christian; for without the faith that works, the hope that excites to universal patience, and the love that labours for the glory of God and the salvation of men, no man can be a true Christian, or ever expect, on the gospel plan, to inherit the kingdom of God.

## SERMON XXVIII.

### THE GLORY OF THE LATTER DAYS.

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JOEL ii. 28, 29, 32.

28. And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh ; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions :
29. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids, in those days, will I pour out my spirit.
32. And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be delivered.

This passage, as quoted by St. Peter, Acts ii. 17, 18, 21, stands thus :

17. And it shall come to pass in the last days (*ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις*), saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh : and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy (*προφητευσουσιν*), and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.
18. And on my servants, and on my handmaidens, I will pour out in those days of my spirit ; and they shall prophesy (*καὶ προφητευσουσι*).
21. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved (*σωθησεται*, “ he shall be made safe,—be preserved).”

HOPE, “ the expectation of good things to come,” has a powerful operation on the human heart in all states and conditions of life ; suppose it be well with us, we

think it may be better ; and the bare possibility of the thing is sufficient to excite hope that it shall be so ; and hence expectation, which, properly speaking, is hope drawn out into unlimited successive acts ; and thus we pass through life with, if not a cheerful, yet an amusing prospect of future good.

All expectation of this kind is legitimate in religion, whether it respect the individual in relation to the Church of God, or whether it respect the Church itself. Every true Christian is hoping for better days in reference to his own religious state ; and for better times in reference to a more extensive dissemination of the words of truth over the earth ; and a larger effusion of the Divine Spirit to make the diffusion of truth effectual to the salvation of men.

In religious matters these expectations are founded on the promises of God ; and the descriptions, often allegorical and figurative, which the sacred writers give of the privileges of true believers, and the glory of the Church, considered as the spiritual body of our Lord Jesus ; for as the HEAD is necessarily glorious, the BODY must be consequently so.

This state of mind and general feeling among Christians, every man on the whole should encourage ; and though it is difficult to correct the exuberance of this hope, yet, if got by misunderstanding or misapplying portions of Scripture, and carrying false views into acts of extravagance, this correction should be attempted by showing the precise meaning of such passages, and rigidly restraining them to that meaning, for all religious feelings and expectations should be directed by religious knowledge ; for even our love to God and man must “ abound more and more in all knowledge, as well in all judgment (or spiritual sense), that we may approve things that are excellent, be sincere and without offence till



the day of Christ ; and be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God ;” Phil. i. 9—11. Without this knowledge and judgment, expectation may be spent in useless hopes, and at last end in bitter disappointment, which is most likely to be succeeded by a measure of unbelief in the promises of God ; for it is natural to suppose that a promise from Eternal Truth should be fulfilled ; and when, after having been strongly pleaded in faith by prayer, the answer appears to be delayed, and at last the heart is sickened by the disappointment of hope, doubts arise relative even to the truth of the promises on which the hope was founded.

Now all this was occasioned by taking a wrong view of the promise ; applying it to that to which it did not refer, making that general which was only particular, or applying to mankind at large what was only spoken of one people, and often even of an individual, in peculiar circumstances. But the greatest mischiefs have been done by applying that to things yet to come, that has had its fulfilment in things already past ; and on this mistake, forming arithmetical calculations relative to the precise time in which those great events, perhaps the children of our own fancy, should actually take place !

What disappointment and confusion have been brought into the minds of many by calculations relative to the termination of certain empires, Papal and Turkish ; the beast and the false prophet ; Christ’s second coming to establish a universal empire, the laws of which are to be administered by his presence corporeally manifested on earth ; and also concerning the time of the final judgment and the end of the world ! When a fancy is pursued, the line of pursuit is only directed by a sort of telegraphic phantoms, unreal land-marks to unreal ob-

jects ; and when the last *ignis fatuus* has terminated its uncertain dance by absorption in some other vapour by which it has been neutralized, we are left in sudden darkness, in the quagmire where all such mental aberrations must necessarily end ; and thus prophecy is prostituted, faith and hope (improperly employed) are disappointed, and religion itself discredited.

Leaving comparisons relative to the times and persons that now are, lest they might be thought invidious, let us go back to the days of the astonishing Lord Napier, the inventor of the logarithms, who, deluded by an initial misapprehension of certain promises and scriptural figurative expressions, began to calculate time and its termination in the general conflagration of the whole solar system, and the final winding up of the mortal story in the last judgment, when the irrevocable doom should be pronounced relative to the evil and the good, and their states rendered unchangeable, being for ever shut in by the deep-driven bolt of God's eternal purpose. This great man, by his calculations on the vials or trumpets in the Apocalypse, found that each vial contained the space of 245 years, that the seventh, or last, begun in A. D. 1541, consequently it would extend to 1786:—"Not," says this most eminent (though deplorably deceived) man, "that I mean that that age or yet the world shall continew so long, because it is said, that for the elect's sake the time shall be shortened ; but I mean, that if the world wer to indure, that seventh age should continew untill the yeare of Christ 1786." But finding some data in the 1335 days of Daniel, chap. xii., and in the times of the thundering angels, Rev. viii. 9, from the former he concluded that the day of judgment would take place in 1700 ; and by the latter, in 1688 ; whence, says he, "it may be confidently expected, that this awful day shall take place between these two periods !" that is,

Lord Napier brought the whole business within the certainty of occurrence in the difference (twelve years), between the above two periods ! and thus our forefathers, who lived in 1688, must be persuaded that within the space of twelve years “the heavens would pass away with a great noise, and the elements should melt with fervent heat, and the earth also and the works that are therein should be burnt up ! Alas for such calculators and expectants ! we, who are alive 129 years after the utter failure of those laborious calculations, find the heavens and the earth in their original perfection ; unchanged in their nature, without a hair’s breadth of deviation in their various and multitudinous motions, performed by an unseen guidance and energy, in the vortex of space ! And such has been and will be the issue of the schemes of all those, who, in their calculations relative to a millennial state of glory just at hand, have been doing little else than tithing mint and anise and cummin, while they omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith. How many mouths are full of the cry of the approaching latter days’ glory, making their views of the subject the test of a sound creed, while those who differ from them are reputed not much better than stubborn heretics.

It is strange that there should be so little caution used on subjects of this kind, where so many wise and learned men have been deceived by their calculations, and led astray by trusting to their own understanding : but adventurers in prediction appear in every generation, every one supposing he has found out the times and seasons which the Father hath put in his own power ; and as he believes that to him the secret has been revealed, he is not deterred by the failure of his predecessors, as he knows they were wrong, because he believes he is right !

That God, the great Sun of righteousness, is deter-

mined to shine more and more unto the perfect day ; and that the light of divine revelation is becoming more generally diffused, and that the work of righteousness in the earth is both extended and deepened, are truths which no friend to God and man would attempt to deny. This is the kingdom, the coming of which our blessed Lord has commanded us to pray for, and strongly to expect ; but even this kingdom of our Lord cometh not with observation ; it advances slowly and silently along in that great way in which the grace and providence of God walk on with an even pace : but we want to see portents,—we are looking for wonderful appearances—we want a different shaking of the nations than that of which God hath spoken ; and we appear to be entering far into the presumption, that the path we have marked out is that in which he must infallibly tread. For, “the glory of the latter day is at hand, he hath promised to come, and we have proved that this is the time ; and he is even now at the doors.”

The text on which these observations are founded, is considered a strong evidence on the subject ; but without entering into the manner in which this text has been applied, and without touching the controversy that has lately been excited, I shall endeavour to give the literal, and what I believe to be the only, sense of the inspired writer, and prove that the great predicted **FACT** has already taken place ; and that the consequences are still in manifest progression, and will continue to come on with the lapse of time, till mortality is swallowed up of life. In doing this I shall—

I. Consider what is meant by the words, “It shall come to pass afterward.”

II. The prediction, “I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh ;” and,

III. The consequences, "They shall prophesy," &c.

IV. What is the deliverance or salvation that shall be the result.

"And it shall come to pass afterward," וְהָיָה אַחֲרָי כֵן *ve-haiya acherey ken*. "And it shall be in the latter times, thus."

In the preceding part of this chapter the prophet had predicted a terrible desolation of the land of Judea by the means of immense swarms of locusts, which should destroy all vegetation, and bring about a severe famine ; but that on their repentance and humiliation God would destroy those destroyers, and bless the land with an unprecedented degree of fertility, so that plenty should be restored, and universal prosperity should prevail in the land.

As the subject gave the prophet occasion, he passes, by a very elegant transition, into a prediction of the great blessings that should be dispensed to the Jews and to the Gentiles in gospel times, by the unsearchable riches of Christ. "It shall come to pass after these things ; אַחֲרָי כֵן *acherey ken* ; these words, says Rab. David Kimchi, always refer to the days of the Messiah, the latter days ; and thus this prophecy is to be interpreted ; and we have the testimony of St. Peter, Acts ii. 14—21, that this prophecy relates to that mighty effusion of the Holy Spirit of which the apostles were the subjects, on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. "But Peter, standing up, lifted up his voice, and said : This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, It shall come to pass in the last days (*ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις*), saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh," &c. ; and he goes on to quote the whole of this prophecy, applying it, by divine authority, to the

events that had lately taken place, and to that mighty baptism of the Spirit under which they then felt and spoke.

We see, therefore, that this prophecy of Joel related to gospel times, to those in which Christ was incarnate, dwelling among men full of grace and truth ; who, being delivered for their offences, was raised again for their justification, and having received the promise of the Father, the Holy Ghost, he had shed forth that which they now saw and heard : see as above, verses 22—33. So we have it fully ascertained that the latter days of which Joel spake, according to the interpretation of St. Peter, were those gospel times in which Christ was manifested in the flesh, lived, suffered, died, was buried, rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, received the promise of the Father, and sent forth that baptism of the Holy Spirit, of which they were at that time made partakers ; and that the prophecy does not refer to any imaginary manifestation of the Holy Spirit, which should take place more than eighteen hundred years afterwards. St. Peter's application of it to those events, and to those only, leaves us without doubt on the propriety of thus understanding the prophecy.

II. We come now to consider the PREDICTION, “ I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.” There is a good saying of Rabbi Tancum, though we know not the tradition from which he quotes ; but he quotes in reference to this prophecy of Joel, “ When Moses laid his hands upon Joshua, the holy blessed God said, In the time of the old text each individual prophet prophesied ; but in the times of the Messiah, all the Israelites shall be prophets.”

The term prophet, among the ancient Jews, not only meant, 1. A man who could foretel future events by the direct inspiration of God, or by the information

which *vivâ voce* he received from him ; but also, 2. A teacher of those young men, called sons of the prophets, who were to be employed in the service of the tabernacle ; 3. One who instructed the people, a preacher ; 4. One who acted as a civil magistrate ; and, 5. A man of faith and prayer, who had power with God, and made effectual supplication for individuals and for the nation.

By prophecy, chiefly, was the will of God made known to men ; and the whole of what is called Divine Revelation came in this way. When this prophecy was delivered, the greater part of the canon of the Scripture was completed ; only Ezekiel, Daniel, and some of the minor prophets, having not yet made their appearance. It is not, however, to what was farther necessary to be done, to complete the Jewish canon, that he speaks here ; but to what should be added under the Messiah ; to what God would give in that last dispensation of justice and mercy, which he was to manifest in the world.

This dispensation might be emphatically called “The dispensation of the Holy Spirit.” The gifts and graces of this Spirit were but rarely given under the Old Testament. Few, besides prophets, priests, and some kings, appear to have been made partakers of them. During the whole of the Mosaic economy the common people shared but little in those gifts and graces. It was only under the Christian dispensation that the kingdom of heaven was opened to all believers. And this is what the prophet means when he introduces God speaking thus : “I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,” i. e., upon mankind at large ; no longer making those distinctions that prevailed formerly, where the great mass of the people were little noticed.

The word בשר *basar*, which is translated *flesh*, signifies properly the *human race* ; that flesh or nature which

was the most eminent. See Gen. ii. 24, Ps. xxxviii. 3—7. And it is certainly used to express all mankind in this prophecy, and in Gen. vi. 12, Isai. xl. 5, and other places. It is also used to express good news, glad tidings ; and by it the term as well as the thing which we call gospel, is designated in the Old Testament ; witness that remarkable passage, Isai. lxi. 1, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings ;” לבשר *le-basar*, to *declare the flesh*, —the *incarnation* : as if the good tidings necessarily implied, God manifested in the FLESH : and nothing could be so properly called preaching, or a declaration of good news, as that in which the incarnation of Christ, and the end for which he was incarnated, were prominently declared, and made the chief part of the subject. What can be called good news to a lost world, but the declaration of God’s mercy in its redemption by Jesus Christ ?

As this “pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh,” is applied by St. Peter, as we have seen, to what took place on the day of Pentecost, when this dispensation was first opened, so its being poured out on all flesh must have some particular relation to the circumstances of that case. For it is expressly said, “there were dwelling (κατοικουντες or sojourning) at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven ;” who consequently were acquainted with the languages of the nations whence they came ; and they were now only sojourning at Jerusalem, having come up to attend at the passover, or for the purpose of merchandise. And the devout men, ανδρες ευλαβεις, *men of good character, respectable, moral men*, were such as could be proper judges of what they heard and saw. They were either native Jews, or such as were born in the countries where their parents sojourned ; or they were Gentiles, proselytes to



Judaism, and were well qualified to give credible testimony relative to the facts that had taken place. At this time there was scarcely a commercial or civilized nation under heaven, where the Jews had not been scattered for the purpose of trade, merchandise, &c. ; and from all those nations it is here said, there were persons present at Jerusalem. Several of those nations are here specified : we shall consider them in order :—

1. PARTHIANS. Parthia anciently included the northern part of modern Persia ; it was situated between the Caspian Sea and Persian Gulf, and rather to the eastward of both.

2. MEDES. Media was a country lying in the vicinity of the Caspian Sea, having Parthia on the east, Assyria on the south, and Mesopotamia on the west.

3. ELAMITES. Probably inhabitants of that country now called Persia. The Medes and Elamites were a neighbouring people, dwelling beyond the Tigris.

4. MESOPOTAMIA. Now called Diarbeck, in Asiatic Turkey, situated between the Tigris and Euphrates ; hence its name—"the country between the rivers." It had Assyria on the east, Arabia Deserta with Babylonia on the south, Syria on the west, and Armenia on the north. It is the same country that was called Padan-Aram by the ancient Hebrews ; and by all the Asiatics is now called *Maverannahar*, i. e., "the country beyond the river."

5. JUDEA. Whether this be meant to express the Jewish Mesopotamia, and that *Ιουδαίαν* should be taken for the adjective, read here as agreeing with *Μεσοποταμίας*, *Mesopotamia*, learned men are not agreed. Vast multitudes of Jews were settled here, and Josephus says the ten tribes dwelt in Mesopotamia in his time. Perhaps Galilee may be understood here, as that was a part of Judea bordering upon Syria, and we know that the dia-

lect of the inhabitants of that province was so different from the other parts of Judea, especially about Jerusalem, as scarcely to be understood, and therefore might be specified here, as the miracle must also operate upon them to enable them clearly and readily to understand what the disciples spoke, who either spoke pure Hebrew, or the Chaldeo-Syriac. For other particulars, see my notes on this verse.

6. CAPPADOCIA. This was an ancient kingdom of Asia-Minor, comprehending all that country that lies between Mount Taurus and the Euxine Sea.

7. PONTUS. Anciently Pontus was a very powerful kingdom of Asia, and originally a part of Cappadocia. It was bounded on the east by Colchis, on the west by the river Halys, on the north by the Black or Euxine Sea, and on the south by Asia Minor. The famous Mithridates was king of this country; and it was one of the last that the Roman power was able to subjugate.

8. ASIA. Probably Asia Minor; it was that part of Turkey in Europe, now called Natolia, or Anatolia.

9. PHRYGIA. A country of Asia Minor, southward of Pontus, lying between the Euxine and Mediterranean Seas.

10. PAMPHYLIA. A country lying near the Mediterranean Sea, between Lycia and Cilicia; it is now called Caramania.

11. EGYPT. A very extensive country of Africa, bounded by the Mediterranean on the north, by the Red Sea and the Isthmus of Suez, which divide it from Arabia, on the east, by Abyssinia or Ethiopia on the south, and by the deserts of Barca and Nubia on the west. It was called Mitzraim by the ancient Hebrews, and now Mesr, by the Arabians. It extends 600 miles from north to south, and from 100 to 200 miles from east to west.

12. **LYBIA**, in a general way among the Greeks, signified Africa; but the south-eastern part in the vicinity of Egypt, bordering on Cyrene, may be here intended.

13. **CYRENE**. A country in Africa, on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, southward of the most western point of the island of Crete.

There were present also at that time several other people, distinguished by the names of the places where they had a temporary residence—strangers of Rome, Jews, and proselytes; persons who had not been in Jerusalem before, but most probably natives of Rome: the Jews might be sojourners there, and the proselytes were heathens professing the Jewish religion.

14. **CRETANS**. Inhabitants of Crete, a large and famous island in the Levant, or eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea, now called Candia.

15. **ARABIANS**. Natives of Arabia, a large and well-known country of Asia, having the Red Sea on the west, the Persian Gulf on the east, Judea on the north, and the Indian Ocean on the south. It is divided into districts that have been denominated Arabia Petræa, Arabia Felix, and Arabia Deserta.

I have entered the more particularly into this geographical sketch of these places, because I am satisfied that in the great work mentioned here, the prophecy in my text began to be fulfilled; and thus to show how wisely it was ordered, that the miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost, called by Joel the “outpouring of the Spirit,” should have taken place at this time, when so many from various nations were present to witness it, and to be themselves subjects of its mighty workings. These, on their return to their respective countries, would naturally proclaim what things they had seen and heard, and by this the way of the apostles was made plain; and thus Christianity made a rapid progress over all those

parts above mentioned, in a very short time after the resurrection of our Lord.

2ndly. I have entered into this subject the more particularly to show that, in the variety of languages possessed by men of various nations then present at Jerusalem, the prophecy in the text might be considered as having a most singular fulfilment. The Holy Spirit was to be poured out upon all flesh—upon mankind at large; and here it might be said the human race was present in their representatives. There was most probably not a kind or national family of man which had not a representative among those Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Mesopotamians, Jews, Cappadocians, people of Pontus, of Asia, of Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Lybia, Cyrene, Rome, Crete, and Arabia. And there was not a regular language of the then known universe, that was not known by some or other of the nations here specified. The three great tongues in which it pleased God at the first to disseminate his truth, viz., the HEBREW, the GREEK, and the LATIN, were here; among them also I can recognize the Syriac, the Chaldee, the Abyssinian or Ethiopic, the Pehlevi or ancient Persian, the Coptic, the Armenian, and the Arabic; and besides how many of the languages of Asia Proper and Asia Minor, with Greek, Slavonic, and Celtic dialects, we cannot say, but we may presume not a few.

It was most probably through this that we find traditions among all the great nations of the universe, relative to the true God, and the great scripture facts. And this miracle thus predicted was, humanly speaking, essentially necessary to prepare the nations of the world for the preaching of the gospel of Christ; and by these means, as we have already seen, was the way of the apostles and first planters of Christianity made plain, not only through all the land of Palestine, but also

through Egypt, Syria, Asia, Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, and probably through many parts of Germany, France, Spain, and the islands of the sea. And it is so managed now by the providence and grace of God, that to all the inhabitants of the earth the word of life is in the act of being sent, by translations of the Bible into the different languages of the habitable world ; and with these Bibles in many languages, Missionaries go forth to proclaim to those peoples in their own languages the unsearchable riches of Christ. Now all these are proofs that the great promise contained in this most important prophecy, is in the fullest progress to be speedily fulfilled even in the utmost sense of the words ; for God is pouring out his Spirit upon ALL FLESH.

III. I shall now consider the consequences of this pouring out of the Spirit, and the instruments which he employs under the direction of this Spirit : “Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.”

We have already seen that a *prophet* signified, 1. A teacher of youth in ecclesiastical matters ; 2. A teacher of the people in the things that concerned their salvation, i. e., a preacher of righteousness ; 3. One that had power in prayer, so as to become an intercessor for men. These gifts and offices were, under the Mosaic dispensation, restrained to particular persons, chosen of God himself ; for the prophetic gifts were in no case hereditary. But under this outpouring of the Spirit there was to be no selection of persons from certain tribes, families, &c. ; but all who received this spirit, and were actuated by it, were to be endued with those gifts and graces, by which they might be able to edify each other, and proclaim to those who were ignorant the unsearchable riches of Christ. They should be exhorters, instructors, preachers, and intercessors, so as to be able to edify the church. It intimates that the graces and gifts of the Spirit would be

both general and abundant ; and has not every age of Christianity been a proof of this ? There have, it is true, been many eminent men in Judaism ; prophets, priests, kings, historians, poets, statesmen, soldiers, heroes, and men deeply devoted to God ; but how few of these in proportion to the 2000 years' length of that dispensation, and the number of the people ! But leaving divine inspiration out of the question, what are they in their respective kinds when compared with Christians in all these characters, offices, and situations ? There have also been some eminent women ; but leaving out extraordinary providences, which worked in their behalf, what were they in number and eminence in comparison of the thousands in Christianity that have been great, wise, pious, and learned ? But suppose we turn our attention to the common people, those who formed the aggregate of the Jewish church, and what shall we see ? Ignorance and indevotion ; they were rebels against God, and all legitimate rule ; murmurers, complainers, malcontents, cruel, and vindictive ; scarcely ever having the form, and more seldom the power, of godliness. On the other hand, look at the aggregate body of the Christian church, and how convincingly true are the words of the poet :—

*Men* in their own eyes were *children* again ;  
 The *children* were wise and solid as *men* :  
 The *women* were fearful of nothing but *sin* ;  
 Their hearts were all cheerful, their consciences clean.

Without the aid of human learning, many Christians, male and female, became not only very respectable for their talents, but also eminently useful ; and possessed so much of the genuine spirit of piety, and the life and power of religion, that they endured all kinds of hardships and persecutions, and loved not their lives even

unto the death, that they might show their invincible love to their God and Saviour, and unalterable attachment to their religion, in possession of which they enjoyed a happiness and foretaste of heaven, that absorbed all earthly and temporal considerations; therefore even the *women* braved death in all its terrific forms, and in the times of persecution were all, at all times, confessors, and multitudes of them martyrs. The *aged men* and *women* saw their *sons* and their *daughters* endued with the *Spirit*, prophesying; not only visiting the sick, and ministering to the necessities of the poor, but also deaconesses in the church, teaching the truths of God to those who had not learned them, bringing, by their good advice and holy practice, Gentiles into the church. In a word, “the *aged men* were vigilant, grave, holy, temperate, sound in the faith, in charity, and in patience.”

“The *aged women* were in behaviour as became holy women, not makers of strife, not intemperate, not false accusers, teachers of good things (*καλοδιδασκαλους*, good able teachers).”

“They taught the *young women* to be wise, to be lovers of their husbands, and lovers of their children, discreet, chaste, attached to their domestic affairs, good, and obedient to their own husbands.”

“The *young men* were also taught to be discreet, and of a sober mind.”

“The *servants* to be obedient to their own masters, to please them well in all things, without contradiction or gainsaying—not defrauding or making waste of their masters’ substance, but showing all good fidelity.” See Tit. ii. 1—10. And all this was grounded on their having received “that grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men; teaching them that, denying all ungodliness and worldly desires, they might live discreetly, right-

eously, and godly in the present world, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for them, that he might redeem them from all unrighteousness, and cleanse to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works ;” Tit. ii. 11—14. Thus the Holy Spirit was poured out upon all, not only to save them from their sins, but to make them wise, holy, and useful. And while the Christian church was faithful to its calling and privileges, thus it was with them.

And to the present hour the same Spirit is poured out upon that church in all its members ; for also upon the *servants* and upon the *handmaids* he pours out his Spirit in these days ; and St. Peter, who lived to witness the initiatory fulfilment of this divine oracle, adds, *και προφητευσουσιν*, “and they shall prophesy ;” instead of being *slaves*, as they in general were among the Jews, they were the *freed-men* and *freed-women* of Christ, and were eligible to some of the most useful offices in the church. For in the Christian church, whether they were male or female, bond or free, their grace being equal, they were all one in Christ Jesus.

This prophecy may be considered as a general promise, that the gifts of teaching and instructing men should not be restricted to any one class or order of the people ; that God would call as he pleased, and qualify the men of his choice ; and should take such out of all ranks, orders, degrees, and offices in society ; and would pour out his Spirit upon them, and endow them with all the gifts and graces necessary to convert sinners, and build up believers on their most holy faith.

And this God has done and is doing. He left the line of Aaron, and took his apostles indiscriminately out of any tribe. He passed by the regular order of the priesthood, and the public schools of the most celebrated doc-



tors, and took his evangelists from among fishermen, tent-makers, and even the Roman tax-gatherers. And lastly, he passed by the whole of the Jewish tribes, and took converts from among the Gentiles, and made them preachers of righteousness to the inhabitants of the whole earth ! The same practice he continues to the present day.

Yet he did not then pass by a man that was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel ; no more than he would now pass by one brought up in any celebrated seminary of learning. He is ever free to use his own gifts, in his own way ; and when learning is sanctified by being devoted to the service of God, and the possessor is pious and humble, and has those natural gifts proper for a public teacher, perhaps we may safely assert that God would in many cases prefer such : but he will have others, *servants* and *handmaids*, persons from the common offices of life, as intimated in the prophecy, that we may see that the conversion of sinners is not by human might nor power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts. The learned man can do no good in the church without his Spirit, and the unlearned must have its gifts and graces ; without which the labours of both will be unprofitable : and thus the excellence of the power is of God, and no flesh can glory in his presence.

It is said here, that when this outpouring shall take place, "The old men shall dream dreams ; and the young men see visions." On this passage, the Rev. John Wesley has a sensible note, viz. : " In young men, the outward senses are most vigorous, and the bodily strength is entire, whereby they are best qualified to sustain the shock which usually attends the visions of God. In old men, the internal senses are most vigorous, suited to divine dreams. Not that the old are wholly excluded from the former, nor the young from the latter." In pri-

mitive times, such dreams and visions were frequent. The canon of Scripture was not yet complete; and supernatural interventions were requisite, in order to conduct the apostles, &c. in their work.

Something more particular should be said concerning the instruments which this Spirit employs in his great work.

The instruments which God used, in the primitive outpouring of his Spirit, for preaching the gospel among the Gentiles, are thus enumerated by Saint Paul, Eph. iv. 11, 12, "God gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

And in 1 Cor. xii. 28 he mentions the same in the following order:—

"God hath set some in the church, 1st, Apostles; 2dly, Prophets; 3dly, Teachers; after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, and diversity of tongues."

Thus we see that God established several offices in his church, furnished these with the proper officers, and, to qualify them for their work, gave them the proper gifts. On this subject St. Paul's reasoning is beautiful and appropriate. As the members in the human body, so the different members of the mystical body of Christ: all are intended by him to have the same relation to each other—to be mutually subservient to each other. He has also made, as in the human body, each member of the church necessary to the beauty, proportion, strength, and perfection of the whole. Not one is useless; not one unnecessary. Paul, Apollos, Cephas, &c., with all their variety of gifts and graces, are "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Hence, no teacher should

be exalted above, or opposed to another. As the eye could not say to the hand, I have no need of thee; so luminous Apollos could not say to laborious Paul, "I can build up and preserve the church without thee." As the foot planted on the ground to support the whole fabric—and as the hands which swing at liberty—and the eye that is continually taking in near and distant objects, are all equally necessary to the whole, and mutually helpful to and dependant on each other; so also are the different ministers and members of the church of Christ. See St. Paul's beautiful apologue, 1 Cor. xii. 12—27.

Now as God has made evident distinctions among the members of the human body (though all are necessary to its perfection and support), so that some occupy a more eminent place than others; so has he in the church: and this, the same Spirit which Joel predicted should be poured out, has himself prescribed: therefore St. Paul, who was under this influence, enumerates to the church at Corinth the principal offices, and the order in which they should stand. Some of these seem to belong exclusively to the primitive church, not being designed to continue, as not being necessary after the establishment of Christianity, and the completion of the canon of the New Covenant Scriptures.

1. APOSTLES are St. Paul's first order—*Αποστολοι*, from *απο*, *from*, and *στελλω*, *I send*, from one person to another, and from one place to another. Persons immediately designated by Christ, and sent by him to preach the gospel, with the knowledge of which they were fully inspired.

2. PROPHETS—*Προφηται*, from *προ*, *before*, and *φημι*, *I speak*. Persons who, under divine inspiration, predict future events: under the apostolic church, there were several of these. But the word *prophet* often, if not

generally, means a public teacher or instructor ; and is often applied to those who preached the gospel. See before.

3. **TEACHERS**, *Διδασκαλοι*, from the verb *διδασκω*, *I teach*. Persons whose chief business it was to instruct the people in the elements of the Christian religion, and their duty to each other.

These were the chief permanent officers in the church ; those mentioned after were occasional, and not permanent in any particular order or succession ; such as miracles, which seems to imply persons endued with miraculous gifts, such as those mentioned Mark xvi. 17, 18 ; casting out devils ; gifts of healings,—such as laying hands upon the sick, which being one of the most beneficent miraculous powers, was most frequently conceded.

*Helpers*: probably the assistants of the apostles, who constantly accompanied them, baptized those whom they converted, and were sent by them to such places as the apostles could not attend to, being otherwise employed. The Levites, under the law were considered the helpers of the priests.

*Governments*. Probably persons who formed the different churches, arranging them in religious society according to their respective graces and gifts, and preserving them in a state of union by proper discipline.

*Diversities of tongues*. Persons who had a supernatural readiness to acquire strange languages ; or who had a miraculous power of speaking and interpreting those they had not learned

*Discerning of spirits* is mentioned by the apostle in ver. 10 of this same chapter : this probably means a gift by which the person so privileged could discern a false miracle from a true one, or a pretender to divine inspi-

ration from one who was really a partaker of the Holy Ghost. It probably extended to the discernment of false professors from true ones, as appears in the case of Peter, in reference to Ananias and his wife Sapphira, Simon Magus, &c.

It has been thought strange by some, that in this enumeration only three distinct officers in the church should be mentioned, *apostles*, *prophets*, and *teachers*—though he is professedly giving us an account of all the officers and gifts necessary for the constitution of a Christian church; and that no mention is made of bishops, presbyters, or deacons, much less of the various officers and offices which the Christian church at present exhibits. That there were bishops, *Επισκοποι*, presbyters or elders, *Πρεσβυτεροι*, and deacons, *Διακονοι*, in the apostolic church, is sufficiently evident from other parts of Scripture. Perhaps bishops are here included under APOSTLES; presbyters, under PROPHETS; and deacons, under TEACHERS; but in several cases bishops and presbyters seem to be the same order.

There are still, in the Christian church, those who answer to the character of *apostles*—persons sent of God to preach the gospel; and this sending appeared by especial providences, as well as by the gifts and graces given to the persons, together with the strong and incessant impression on their own minds, that a dispensation of the gospel was committed unto them, and woe would betide them if they did not preach it.

Prophets may include the ordinary ministers of any Christian church; those appointed by that church according to its own discipline, or peculiar customs, whether Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Independent, or Methodist: but God will ever reserve to himself the prerogative of sending apostles or extraordinary ministers

among or from all those different classes ; the success of whose labours will ascertain the certainty of their divine mission.

As to **TEACHERS**, or deacons, they abound in all churches, and about their office there is little dispute : they are under-ministers who visit and pray with the sick ; help different departments of the church with counsel and advice ; examine the progress which those more immediately under their care are making in the divine life, reporting the internal state of the church to the prophet or preacher of that church ; that he may the better know how to suit his public ministrations to the necessities of the people.

In Eph. iv. 11, St. Paul mentions evangelists,—those whose particular gift is manifest in their mode of preaching Christ crucified ; showing the nature, extent, worth, and efficacy of his agony and bloody sweat, his cross and passion, his death and burial, his glorious resurrection and ascension, and his powerful mediation at the throne of God.

In the same place he mentions **PASTORS** and **TEACHERS** : pastors are those who feed the flock—teachers are those who direct it. Probably the deacon implies both ; at least in many cases both the offices seem to be so incorporated, as to be discharged by the same person.

Such were the officers which the Holy Spirit influenced and directed in those offices, in which he designed they should act, for the fulfilment of the work of the ministry. But in process of time, the offices were greatly blended, till at last distinction was nearly, if not altogether lost ; so that in the present day, we can scarcely dare to say such and such were the duties discharged by those officers whose official names we borrow from the Greek original of the new covenant : such as *apostle*, *prophet*, *presbyter*, *bishop*, *deacon*, *evangelist*, *canon*, &c. ;

but this we know, that whatever tended to “the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ ; that all might come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ ;” was performed by those who are here called apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

IV. I come now to consider the deliverance which the prophet foretels, as the consequence of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit : “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be delivered ; for in Mount Zion and Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said,” ver. 32. On this passage Bishop Newcome says, “This refers to the safety of the Christians during the Jewish and the Roman war.” It may be so, but this would be a very poor consequence of such an event as the prophet predicts here, were there nothing more intended by it. The pouring out such an abundance of the gifts and the graces of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh, can be but ill explained by the escape of a few hundred Christians from Jerusalem, at the time that Cestius Gallus, the Roman general, began to lay siege to that city. That such an escape took place, we have respectable authority to believe ; and that this escape from the Roman sword might point out metaphorically the escape of those who, by invoking the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, escape from the wrath of Divine justice, and the bitter pains of eternal death ; and we shall find that we have apostolic authority thus to apply it : “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord.” The original will give us extra light on this passage, יהיה כל אשר יקרא בשם יהוה ימלט *vehaiyah col asher yikra beshem Yehovah yimmalet*, “And it shall be, that all who invoke in the name of Jehovah shall escape.” St. Paul quotes

this verse, Rom. x. 14. I shall take the context from ver. 9. “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”—“For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon (ἐπικαλεσθῆται, *shall invoke*) the name of the Lord (σωθησεται), shall be saved.” That Christ is the Jehovah here intended, seems evident from the apostle’s quotation, and that he understood Joel as speaking concerning him; and therefore his word, Κύριος, *Lord*, must answer to the prophet’s word, יְהוָה *Yehovah*, which by the way is no mean proof of the Godhead of Christ. If the text be translated, *Whosoever shall invoke in the name of the Lord*, which translation the Hebrew will easily bear, yet still the term Jehovah, the incommunicable name, is given to Christ; because invoking in the name signifies soliciting one in the name or on the account of another. He who is invoked is God; He, in whose name he is invoked, is Jesus the CHRIST, who is here called Jehovah: and then we see that the meaning of the Holy Spirit, both in the prophet and apostle, is, He who asks mercy from God, in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ, shall get his soul saved. “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself; and there is no name given under heaven among men by which they can be saved, nor is there salvation in any other.” And as the prophet speaks of the days of the Messiah, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, he speaks of this salvation; for this is the sum and substance of the gospel.

The prophet adds, “For in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, shall be deliverance.” Our blessed Lord first



began to preach his gospel in Mount Zion, in the temple, and throughout Jerusalem. There he formed his church; and thence he sent his apostles and evangelists to every part of the globe: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Of the Jews, there was but a *remnant*—a very small number, that received the doctrine of the gospel; here called "the remnant whom the Lord should call," קרא *koré*, whom he was calling. Many were called who would not obey; but they who obeyed the call were saved; and still he delivers from sin, and death, and hell, all those who call upon him.

#### CONCLUSION.

I have now taken a particular view of this prophecy, and of the several references to it in the New Testament; and have seen that it speaks of the glory of the gospel times, which are represented in the sacred writings as the last and latter day or days—the last times; that is, the last dispensation of God's justice and mercy; that to which all the preceding dispensations referred—in which they are all completed—and after which no other is ever to take place; as this has provided everything that the justice of God requires, and everything that the fallen race of man needs, in order to its full restoration to the image of God, and its complete preparation for an eternal glory.

Of this grand event Isaiah, chap. ii. 2, 3, speaks in nearly similar language: "And it shall come to pass, באחרית הימים *beacharith hayamim*, in the *last days*, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob;

and he will teach us of his ways; and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

The prophet Micah, chap. iv. 1, &c., about fifty years after this, quotes this place of Isaiah at length, manifestly referring to the same times; and most likely the prophet Ezekiel has the same event in view in chap. xvii. 22—24, and xxxviii. Hosea, chap. iii. 1—5, manifestly refers to the gospel times with a similar phraseology; see ver. 5: "*Afterward*, אַחֲרָי *achar*, shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness," באַחֲרַיִת beacharith hayamim, "in those latter days." And all these have a reference to, and seem founded upon, the prophecy which Jacob, Gen. xlix. 1, &c., delivered to his sons: "And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you what shall befall you, באַחֲרַיִת beacharith hayamim, in those *latter days*?" and in the tenth verse we have that remarkable prediction of the Messiah, and the glorious spread of his kingdom: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall be the gathering of the people."

St. Paul seems to have had all the above places in view, Heb. i. 1, 2: "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath *in these last days* ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων, spoken unto us by his Son."

The beloved disciple, also, uses the same phraseology, speaking of the same things, 1 John ii. 18: "Little children, it is the *last time*, ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστὶ, and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now there are many Antichrists; whereby we know ὅτι ἐσχάτη ὥρα

εστω, that it is the *last time*." St. Paul calls these times "the ends of the world," 1 Cor. x. 11.

Now the glory of the latter days is evidently the revelation of Christ, and the universal pouring out of his Spirit ; for as he, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man, Heb. ii. 9 ; and his grace, which brings salvation to all men, hath appeared, Tit. ii. 11 ; so the Holy Spirit was "to convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment," John xvi. 8 ; to bear witness in the conscience of what Christ delivered in his discourses ; to purify the hearts of men, and make them habitations of God, Eph. ii. 22. As the disgrace of man in all times was sin and rebellion against God, so the glory of these latter times is the redemption of man from its power, its guilt, and its pollution ; so that faith, working by love, should fill the whole life with a cheerful obedience. Nor are we in any times to expect a greater or more efficacious Saviour than Jesus Christ ; nor a more powerful and energetic Agent than the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of judgment, and the Spirit of burning. Nor do I find in any part of the divine oracles that there is any reserve of this Spirit, in his gifts and graces, for some future times ; nor do I find from these sacred records, that there is one ray of his light, or spark of his influence, that may not be had now, for all the purposes of salvation from sin here, and glorification hereafter, in as abundant a manner as can be expected, between this present hour, and that in which the angel shall swear by Him who liveth for ever and ever, that time shall be no longer.

I hold also, that those who are absurdly putting off the day of salvation, in expectation of any outpouring of God's Spirit that may not now be had through Christ, by faith and prayer, are rejecting their own mercies, are

encompassing themselves with sparks of their own kindling, and shall lie down in sorrow in consequence.

It is truly an astonishing thing that men will prefer hope to enjoyment; and rather content themselves with blessings in prospect than in possession. Thousands, in their affections, conversation, and conduct, are wandering after an undefined and undefinable period, commonly called a millennial glory, while expectation is paralyzed, and prayer and faith restrained in reference to present salvation: and yet none of these can tell what even a day may bring forth; for now we stand on the verge of eternity: and because it is so, now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation.

These are the times in which Christ offers to dwell in the hearts of all true believers by faith, that they may be rooted and grounded in love, and prove with all saints what is the length, and breadth, and depth, and height, and know the love of God that passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fulness of God! Is there anything greater than this to be expected or obtained on this side eternity? Can our hearts be more than filled? Can our souls be filled with more than all the fulness of God? These are the days of the Son of man; now is the Holy Spirit given in his plenitude; never were there times more favourable; never were spiritual advantages more numerous; never was the light more abundant; never were the Holy Scriptures more extensively dispersed; and never were their contents better understood. We have not that time which is looked for under the misapprehended title of millennial glory; and yet the whole earth is in the way of being filled with the knowledge of God! Reader, lay these things to heart; now arise, and shake thyself from the dust:—we have seen the land, and behold it is very good; and are ye still?

Be not slothful to go and enter to possess the land. Awake, awake ; put on thy strength, O Zion ; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the Holy City ; for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Death is at the door ; but the power of the Lord is present to heal. O Thou, who dwellest between the cherubim, shine forth ! Amen.

## SERMON XXIX.

### SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE BEING AND PROVIDENCE OF A GOD.

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HEBREWS xi. 6.

“He that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them who diligently seek him.”

I. METAPHYSICIANS and philosophers, in order to prove the existence of God, have used two modes of argumentation :—

*A priori*,—proofs drawn from the necessity that such a Being as God is must exist. Arguments of this kind do not produce anything in evidence which is derived from his works.

*A posteriori*,—proofs of the being and perfections of God, drawn from his own works.

#### PROPOSITIONS *à PRIORI*.

Prop. I.—If there be no one being in the universe but such as might possibly not have existed, it would follow, that there might possibly have been no existence at all; and if that could be so, it would be also possible that the present existence might have arisen from total non-existence, which is absurd. Therefore, it is not possible that there might have been no existence at all. Consequently, an impossibility of not existing must be

found somewhere ; there must have been a Being whose non-existence is impossible.

II. The whole nature of an unoriginated Being, or aggregate of his attributes, must be unoriginated, and necessarily what it is. A being cannot produce its own attributes ; for this would suppose it acted before it existed. There is nothing in the nature of this Being that is contingent, or could have been otherwise than it is ; for whatever is contingent must have a cause to determine its mode of existence.

III.—The attributes of an unoriginated Being must be possessed by it unlimitedly ; for to possess an attribute imperfectly, or only in a certain degree, must suppose some cause to have modified this Being, so as to make him incapable of having that attribute in any other than an imperfect degree. But no cause can be admitted in this case, because this is the first of all beings, and the cause of all things. Farther, an imperfect attribute, or any one that is not in its highest degree, must be capable of improvement by exercise and experience ; which would imply that the unoriginated Being must be originally imperfect ; and that he was deriving farther degrees of perfection from the exercise of his own powers, and acquaintance with his own works.

IV.—The unoriginated Being must exist everywhere, in the same manner he does anywhere ; for if he did not, it would suppose some cause by which his presence was limited ; but there can be no cause to limit that presence. See before.

V This unoriginated Being must be a simple uncompounded substance, identically the same everywhere ; not consisting of parts, for these must be distinct and independent ; nor of whole, for this is the aggregate of parts ; nor of magnitude or quantity, for these signify a composition of parts. This Being must be as truly one

and omnipresent, as the present moment of time is indivisibly one in all places at once ; and can no more be limited or measured by time, than the present moment can by duration.

Hence this Being cannot be matter or body, because to these belong extension, divisibility, figurability, and mobility, which imply limitation. God and matter have essentially contrary properties.

God is not *material*. It has already been shown, that there necessarily must exist one infinite, unoriginated, and eternal Being. Now this Being must be a thinking Being ; for it is as impossible to conceive that unthinking matter could produce a thinking, intelligent Being, as it is to conceive that nothing can produce matter.

Let us suppose any parcel of matter to be eternal, we shall find it in itself unable to produce anything. Let us suppose its parts firmly at rest together ; if there were no other being in the world, must it not eternally remain so, a dead, inactive lump ? Is it possible to conceive that it can add motion to itself, or produce it in other portions of matter ? Matter, therefore, by its own strength, cannot produce in itself so much as motion. The motion it has must also be from eternity, or else added to matter by some other being more powerful than itself.

But let us suppose motion eternal too ; yet matter, unthinking matter, and motion, could never produce thought. Knowledge will still be as far beyond the power of motion and matter to produce, as matter is beyond the power of nothing to produce. Divide matter into as minute parts as you will, vary the figure and motion of it as much as you please, it will operate no other way upon other bodies of proportionate bulk than it did before this division. The minutest particles of matter would impel or resist one another, just as the



greater do ; and that is all that they can do. So that if we will suppose nothing eternal, matter can never begin to be. If we suppose bare matter, without motion, eternal ; then motion can never begin to be. If we suppose only matter and motion eternal, then thought can never begin to be. For, it is impossible to conceive that matter, either with or without motion, could have originally, in and from itself, sense, perception, and knowledge ; as is evident from hence, that sense, perception, and knowledge must be properties eternally separate from matter, and every particle of it.

Since, therefore, whatsoever is the first eternal Being must necessarily be a thinking Being, and whatsoever is first of all things must necessarily contain in it, and actually have, at least, all the perfections that can ever after appear to exist ; it necessarily follows that the first eternal Being cannot be matter.

VI. This Being must possess intelligence and power unlimited, and all other attributes that are in themselves absolute perfections.

Attributes are divided into natural and moral, or primary and secondary. The first are those which essentially belong to the nature of a Being considered in itself ; the second in its manner of acting towards others. All the attributes of God being uncontingent, must be unlimited ; and therefore his knowledge must extend to everything that can be known, and his power to everything that can be done.

VII. There cannot be in the universe more than one unoriginated Being ; for as this Being is possessed of infinite attributes, let us suppose a second unoriginated Being. He must possess the same ; for both these Beings are eternal, and necessarily the same, everywhere alike present, without any possible difference or distinction, and therefore one and the same. Two such

cannot subsist; and the supposition of a second such Being is only a mental repetition of the being and attributes of the first.

VIII. All things owe their existence to their First Cause, operating according to its own free will. Absolute power does not act of necessity, but freely; the power may exist without exertion; if it did not, then it acts by necessity; and if so, necessity is the agent, and not the free power of the independent God. He can do what he will, but he will do only what is right, &c.

The like may be said of his omniscience. He knows himself, and what he has formed, and what he can do; but is not necessitated to know as certain what himself has made contingent. If God must continually act because he is omnipotent, and know because he is omniscient; then does not this imply that he must be constantly employed in doing or undoing whatever is possible to be done or undone, and knowing all that is, and all that can be, and what cannot be? Is not this absurd?

From the above we may infer another proposition, which may serve as a connecting principle between arguments *à priori* and *à posteriori*, viz.:

IX. God is a Being of infinite goodness, wisdom, mercy, justice, and truth; and all other perfections which become the Framer and Governor of the universe.

GOODNESS consists in being pleased with communicating happiness to others.

WISDOM, in making a right or beneficent use of knowledge or power; for no being, howsoever intelligent or powerful, is said to act wisely, but that which makes a good or beneficent use of knowledge and power. Hence wisdom and goodness must be ever conjoined to make any act of power perfect. As he is wise, he knows

what is best to be done ; powerful, he can do it ; good, he will do it. Justice, mercy, truth, or faithfulness, are not distinct attributes, but denominations given to his power and wisdom in their various operations on different occasions, in reference to his creatures.

God's liberty of acting :—his power and wisdom being infinite, he cannot be prevented by any outward cause ; his nature being essentially good, he can have no opposition from within ; his power and all his other attributes being infinite, eternal, and consequently unlimited, can have no opposition from without ; and his liberty consists in his being free to act or not act, or infinitely, or limitedly, to vary his operations according to his own wisdom, goodness, and truth. See also the late Bishop of Ossory, Chevalier Ramsay, Dr. S. Clarke, and others.

#### SKETCHES OF PROOFS *à POSTERIORI*.

##### *Recapitulation of the preceding Propositions.*

II. In the argument *à priori*, in order to demonstrate the being of a God, it was attempted to prove that there must have been a Being whose non-existence is impossible. In arguing on this subject it has been shown,

1. That this Being was unoriginated.
2. That all his attributes must also be unoriginated.
3. That these attributes must be unlimited, and absolutely perfect.
4. That this Being must exist everywhere, in the same manner he does anywhere.
5. That he is simple and uncompounded ; not consisting of parts, nor of whole, nor of magnitude, nor of quantity.
6. That he must possess intelligence and power unlimited ; and all other attributes that are in themselves absolute perfections.

7. That there cannot be in the universe any more than one such unoriginated, simple, and infinite Being.

8. That all things owe their existence to this First Cause, operating, not according to any kind of necessity, but according to its own free will. And,—

9. That as, in all his operations, all his attributes must concur and combine ; so all the works of his hands must bear the impress of wisdom and goodness ; of that wisdom which consists in making a right use of knowledge and power—using both beneficially ; of that goodness which consists in being pleased with communicating happiness to others.

Hence may be deduced CREATION—the plan of which proceeded from his wisdom ; the execution from his power ; and the result a proof of his goodness.

From these data we might proceed to prove the being of a God, and his beneficence and moral government of the world *à posteriori*—arguing from the effects to the cause.

And, first, a Being of infinite wisdom must be expected to form his works so as to evidence that wisdom in their multiplicity, variety, internal structure, arrangement, connexions, and dependencies ; and, consequently, that these works must be in many respects inscrutable to man. And this, as they are his works, must be one of their characteristics.

Whether there be any other kind of beings than spiritual and material, and such as are of a mixed nature, we cannot tell ; but we have no ideas of any other kinds, nor can we conceive the possibility of the existence of any other ; as we have no ideas of any figure that is not formed of straight or curved lines, or a mixture of both.

God, the uncreated Spirit, manifests himself by ma-

terial substances. Created spirits must be manifested in the same way ; and though matter may exist without spirit, and spirit without matter, yet, without the latter, spirit cannot become manifest. Hence matter appears to have been created for the use of spirit or intellectual beings.

Creation, in general, demonstrates the being of a God.

The SOLAR SYSTEM, and plurality of worlds ; magnitude, distances, velocity, and gravity of the celestial bodies ; projectile and centripetal forces ; centre of gravity ; ellipsis ; double and treble motion ; attraction ; all demonstrate the wisdom, power, and goodness of God.

VEGETATION—Plants ; trees ; circulation of nutritious juices ; composition of ligneous fibres ; dissolution and regeneration of terrestrial productions.

PRESERVATION of genera and species is a demonstration of infinite skill, and of the wisest and most beneficent providence.

MAN.—Life ; nutrition ; sleep ; the senses, particularly vision and muscular motion ; each furnishes a series of irresistible arguments.

The HEART, and the circulation of the blood, afford the most striking proofs ; and on this point let the reader particularly fix his attention.

In a healthy state, the heart makes eighty pulsations in a minute ; and it is calculated that from two ounces to two ounces and a half of blood are expelled into the aorta at each pulsation ; consequently, at least nine thousand six hundred ounces will be thrown into the aorta in an hour, which would amount to one thousand four hundred and forty pounds in one day !

At each pulsation this quantum of blood is propelled eight inches, which amounts to fifty feet in a minute !

The quantity of blood in a human body is, on an average, about thirty pounds, and passes through the heart about twenty-three times in the space of one hour.

A weight of fifty pounds hung to the foot, the leg laid across the opposite knee, was raised by the action of the popliteal artery. Allowing for the distance from the centre of motion, this proves that the heart must possess a power of at least four hundred pounds !

The blood circulates by pressure from behind, occasioned by the action of the heart, which pressure, having propelled it, according to the laws of gravity, to the extremities, reconducts it, contrary to those laws, back to the heart. How is this effected ? It has been supposed that the ARTERIES contribute much to the circulation of the blood ; were it even so, it would be comparatively useless, as they cease where such an auxiliary power is most wanting, at the extremities, where their anastomosis with the veins takes place ; and the veins are not supposed to possess any such propelling power.

But that the arteries possess no such power, Bichat has proved by the following experiment. He took the arm of a dead man, placed it in warm water, inserted one end of a tube in the brachial artery, and the other end in the carotid artery of a living dog ; the blood circulated in the dead arm, the pulse of which beat regularly by the action of the heart of the living animal. Is there not a wondrous and especial providence of God, by which this is effected ?

Others have attributed the pulsation of the heart itself to the stimulating nature of the blood. Bichat has disproved this by the following experiments :

1. Expose the heart of an animal, and empty it ; apply a stimulus to its muscles, and it will dilate, and contract, as if it were full.

2. Puncture all the large vessels connected with the

heart, so as to empty it entirely ; and the alternate contractions and dilations will continue for some time, notwithstanding the total absence of the blood.

3. Remove two hearts of equal bulk from two living animals ; place the fingers in the ventricles of the one, and grasp the other in the opposite hand, and it will be found that the effort of the latter in its dilation, is as forcible as the other in its contraction.

Incessant action of the heart. Its unweariedness. What exhausts all other muscles appears to increase its action and its force ! Can any person conceive how it is possible that a muscle can be in incessant action for threescore, fourcore, or a hundred years, without any kind of weariness ? There is nothing in nature that can well explain this. Over its motion the mind has no power. This is wisely ordered ; as many, in momentary fits of caprice, despair, and passion, would suspend the circulation, and thus put an end to their lives.

*Providence*, or the economical government of God, in the provision for men and animals. Never too much ; never too little ; the produce of the earth being ever in proportion to the consumers ; and the consumers to that produce.

*Redemption*.—1. As all things are intimately known to God, he must know wherein the happiness of human beings consists, and may, from his goodness, be expected to make every provision for that happiness.

2. Every sentient creature is capable of happiness or misery.

3. No creature can choose a state of misery for itself, because no creature can desire to be unhappy.

4. If any being could choose that state for another, he must be led to it by some motive which may make it eligible or desirable ; and this must spring from his envy, jealousy, fear, or a conviction that the wretched-

ness of the other will contribute to his own happiness. None of these can exist in God, the Creator ; consequently, he must be supposed to have made man for happiness. His counsels never change ; and, therefore, when man had fallen, he provided him a Saviour : this might be naturally expected from his infinite benevolence.

The moral changes made in sinners, are proofs of the being, agency, goodness, and presence of God.

Man's existence is a proof of the Being of God ; he feels himself to be the effect of a Cause, and that Cause to be wise, powerful, and good. There is evidently no cause in nature capable of producing such an effect, for no operation of nature can produce mind or intellect ; the wonderful structure of the body, and the astonishing powers of the mind, equally prove that God is our Maker, and that in him we live, move, and have our being.

III. Astronomical phenomena, very difficult to be accounted for upon natural principles, are strong evidences of the being and continual agency of God.

#### PHENOMENON I.

The motion of a planet in an elliptic orbit is truly wonderful, and incapable of a physical demonstration as to its commencement. From its aphelion, or greatest distance from the sun, or body round which it revolves, to its perihelion or least distance, its motion is continually accelerated ; and from its perihelion to its aphelion as constantly retarded. From what source has the planet derived that power which it opposes to the solar attraction in such a manner that when passing from aphelion to perihelion, by a continued acceleration, it is prevented from making a nearer approach to the sun ? And, on the other hand, what influence prevents the



planet, after it has passed, by a continued retardation, from perihelion to aphelion, from going altogether out of the solar attraction, and causes it to return again to perihelion ? Sir Isaac Newton has fully answered these questions in his demonstration that this phenomenon is a necessary result of the laws of gravity and projectile forces ; it is worthy of observation that, to account for a planet's moving in an elliptic orbit, little differing from a circle, and having the sun in the lower focus, the projectile force of the planet, or the power by which the projected body tends to move forward in a straight line, is shown to be nearly sufficient to counterbalance the planet's gravitating power, or, which is the same thing, the attraction of the central body ; for the demonstration, the particulars of which are too complicated to be here detailed, puts us in possession of the following facts :—If a planet be projected in a direction exactly perpendicular to the line joining it and the central body, with a velocity equal to what it would acquire by falling half way to the centre by attraction alone, it will describe a circle round the central body. If the velocity of projection be greater than this, but not equal to what the planet would acquire in falling to the centre, it will move in an elliptical orbit more or less eccentric, according to the greater or less degree of projectile force. If the velocity of projection be equal to that which the planet would acquire in falling to the central body, it will move in a parabola ; if greater than this, in a hyperbola. Now it cannot be demonstrated upon physical principles that a planet should have a certain projectile force, and no other ; or, which is the same, that it should be projected with a given velocity and direction ; for it is a law of nature, ably demonstrated by Newton in his *Principia*, that all bodies have such an indifference to rest or motion, that, if once at rest, they must remain

eternally so, unless acted upon by some power sufficient to move them ; and that a body once put in motion will proceed of itself ever after in a straight line, if not diverted out of this rectilinear course by some influence. Every planetary body has a certain projectile force ; therefore, some previously existing cause must have communicated it. The planets have not only a projectile force, but this power is at the same time nearly a counterbalance to its gravitation, or the attraction of the central body ; so that by virtue of these powers, thus harmoniously united, the planets perform their revolutions in orbits nearly circular, with the greatest regularity. It hence follows, that the cause which has originally projected the planets with a given velocity and direction, so as nearly to produce an equilibrium in the centrifugal and centripetal powers, is infinitely intelligent ; therefore this cause must be God.

As all the planets move in orbits more or less elliptical, when they could have been made to move in circles by a particular adjustment of the attractive and projectile forces, the divine purpose must be best answered by the eccentric orbit. The habitable earth evidently derives very great advantage from the elliptical orbit, for in consequence of it the sun is seven or eight days of every year longer on the northern side of the ecliptic than he is on the southern ; i. e., from the 21st of March, when he crosses the equator northward, to the 23rd of September, when he again returns to the equator, there are 186 days ; but from the 23rd of September, or autumnal equinox, to the 21st of March, or vernal equinox, there are only 179 days. From this circumstance, the northern hemisphere, which it pleased God should contain by far the greatest portion of land, is considerably warmer towards the polar regions than in

similar latitudes towards the south pole, where an equal degree of temperature is not needed. Circumnavigators have not yet been able (because of the great cold of the south polar regions) to proceed beyond seventy-two or seventy-three degrees of south latitude; or, which is the same thing, to approach the south pole nearer than about 1200 miles; but the northern frigid zone, possessing a greater temperature, has been explored to within about 600 miles of the pole, i. e., to nearly eighty-two degrees of north latitude.

## PHENOMENON II.

The double motion of a primary planet, namely, its annual revolution and diurnal rotation, is one of the greatest wonders the science of astronomy presents to our view. The laws which regulate the periods of the latter of these motions are so completely hidden from man, notwithstanding his present great extension of philosophic research, that the times which the planets employ in their rotations can only be determined by observation. The first of these motions results from projection and gravitation, and depends on the velocity and direction originally impressed on the planet: the second results from a force acting on the planet in a line not passing through the centre of gravity, while an opposite force is applied at the centre to prevent a change in the progressive motion. The period of rotation will depend on this oblique force, and be unvaried while uninfluenced by other causes, or by forces acting towards the same parts on both sides the centre. Hence the rotations of the planets will be uniform; but their existence and periods can be known only by observations. The astonishing accuracy with which celestial observations have been

conducted within the last one hundred years, has enabled astronomers to demonstrate that the neighbouring planets very sensibly affect the figure of the earth's orbit, and consequently its motion in its orbit. Of this every one may be convinced who examines the calculus employed in ascertaining for any particular point of time the sun's place in the heavens; or, which is the same thing, the point of the earth's orbit which is exactly opposed to the place of the earth in this orbit. Thus the maximum that the earth is affected by Venus, is nine seconds and seven-tenths of a degree; by Mars, six seconds and seven-tenths; and by Jupiter, eight seconds two-thirds, &c. But no astronomer since the foundation of the world has been able to demonstrate that the earth's motion in the heavens is at all accelerated or retarded by the diurnal rotation; or, on the other hand, that the earth's motion on its axis experiences the least irregularity from the annual revolution. How wonderful is this contrivance! and what incalculable benefits result from it! The uninterrupted and equable diurnal rotation of the earth gives us day and night in their succession, and the annual revolution causes all the varied scenery of the year. If one motion interfered with the other, the return of day and night would be irregular, and the change of seasons attended with uncertainty to the husbandman. These two motions are therefore harmoniously impressed upon the earth, that the gracious promise of the great Creator might be fulfilled, "While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease." The double motion of a secondary planet is still more singular than that of its primary; for (taking the moon for an example), besides its particular revolution round the earth, which is performed in twenty-seven days, seven hours, forty-three minutes, four seconds and a half; it is carried round the sun with

the earth once every year. Of all the planetary motions with which we have a tolerable acquaintance, that of the moon is the most intricate : upwards of twenty equations are necessary in the great majority of cases, to reduce her mean to her true place. They depend on the different distances of the earth from the sun in its annual revolution, the position of the lunar nodes, the moon's place in her orbit, and various other causes, including the effects of the planetary attractions. Who can form an adequate conception of that influence of the earth which thus draws the moon with it round the sun, precisely in the same manner as if it were a loose or detached part of the earth's surface, notwithstanding the intervening distance of about two hundred and forty-thousand miles ; and, at the same time, leaves undisturbed the moon's proper motion round the earth ? And what beneficent purposes are subserved by this harmony ? In consequence of it we have the periodical returns of new and full moon ; and the ebbing and flowing of the sea, which depend on the various lunar phases, with respect to the sun and earth (as is demonstrable from each of these phases being continually contemporaneous with a particular phenomenon of the tides), these always succeed each other with a regularity necessarily equal to that of the causes which produce them. These motions of rotation, and of a secondary planet about its primary, clearly demonstrate the existence of a Supreme Intelligent Cause who first gave them birth.

### PHENOMENON III.

The impression of an inconceivably rapid motion upon the earth without disturbing, in the smallest degree, any thing upon its surface, or in the atmosphere which surrounds it, is another instance of the infinite wisdom of God. That principle with which God has endued the

celestial bodies, in order to accomplish this end, is called gravity or attraction. The existence of this influence is easily demonstrable from the curious law which pervades all the bodies in the solar system, and probably every other body in the whole compass of space. This law, viz., that the squares of the periodic times of the planets are to each other as the cubes of their mean distances from the central body, was first discovered by Kepler, and afterwards demonstrated by Sir Isaac Newton, as the necessary result of a still more general law, viz., that gravitation is directly as the quantity of matter, and inversely as the square of the distance. Thus, if the distance of but one planet from the sun be known, and the periodic revolutions of the whole, the distance of each from the sun is easily ascertained. The mean distance of the earth from the sun has been found, by the transits of Venus, in 1761 and 1769, to be about ninety-five and a half millions of English miles; and the periodic times of all the planets are known by direct observation. Thus, to find the distance of Jupiter from the sun, nothing more is necessary than first to square the period of the earth, 365 days, 5 hours,  $48\frac{3}{4}$  minutes; and that of Jupiter, 11 years, 315 days, 14 hours and a half; and divide the greater product by the less, to find the proportion one bears to the other; then to cube the earth's mean distance from the sun,  $95\frac{1}{2}$  millions, and multiply the cube by the proportion between the periodic times already found; and the cube root of the last product will be the distance required. By this means it was that the distances of the different planets from the sun, and of the satellites from the primaries (for this law extends to the satellites), have been calculated. From this law it is evident to every one that deeply considers this subject, that the planets revolve in orbits by an influence emanating from the sun; for the nearer a planet is to

the sun, the swifter is its motion in its orbit, and *vice versa*. The singular phenomenon of a planet's describing equal areas in equal times, results from the inability of bodies to change their state, combined with a force directed to the centre round which the areas are described. Thus, if a planet describe in twenty-four hours any arc of its orbit, and the area contained within that arc and two straight lines drawn from its extremities and meeting in the sun be ascertained ; it will be precisely equal to what the planet will describe in any other twenty-four hours, the greater or less quantity of the arc described being continually compensated by the less or greater extent of the straight lines including the respective areas. We also find that, by virtue of these laws, the motion of a planet in its orbit is not decreased in arithmetical proportion to the increase of the distance from the central body ; for the hourly orbital motion of the Georgium Sidus, for example, is only about five times slower than that of the earth, though its distance from the sun is full nineteen times greater.

Every man may convince himself of the existence of gravity, by observing the phenomena attending falling bodies. Why is it that the velocity of a falling body is continually accelerated till it arrives on the earth ? We answer, that the earth continually attracts it ; consequently, its velocity must be continually increasing as it falls. It is also observable that the nature of the influence on falling bodies is precisely the same with that which retains the planets in their orbits : by numerous experiments it is found, that if the falling body descend towards the earth 16 feet in the first second (a statement very near the truth), it will fall through three times this space, or 48 feet, in the next second ; five times this space, or 80 feet, in the third second ; seven times this space, or 112 feet, in the fourth second ; nine

times this space, or 144 feet, in the fifth second, &c. Hence the spaces fallen through are as the squares of the times of falling, i. e., in the first second the body falls 16 feet; and in the next second 48 feet; consequently, the body falls as many feet in the two first seconds as is equal to the sum of these two numbers, viz., 64, which is 16 multiplied by 4, the square of 2, the number of seconds it took up in falling through the first 64 feet.

The above is but a very brief account of the influence of this wonderful principle, which is universally diffused through nature, and capable of attracting every particle of matter, under all its possible modifications, and of imparting to each substance, from the lightest gas to the most ponderous metal, that property which constitutes one body specifically heavier or lighter than another. To detail all the benefits which result from it, would be almost to give a history of the whole material creation. But it may be asked, What is gravity? To the solution of this question natural philosophy is unable to lead us. Suffice it to say, all we know of gravity is its mode of operation, and that it is, like its Great Creator, an all-pervading and continued energy. Therefore, that it is, and not in what it consists, is capable of demonstration.

I gladly borrow the conclusion of a very surprising and deeply scientific work, just now published, entitled, "A New Theory of Physics, founded on Gravitation; applied to explain the Phenomena of Chemistry, Electricity, Galvanism, Magnetism, and Electro-Magnetism. By T. Exley, M. A."

"Of all the departments of natural philosophy, that of physical astronomy, at the first sight, would seem more than any other to be placed beyond the reach of our faculties; but it is well known that there is none in which we have advanced with so much success, and de-



monstrative certainty ; for this we are chiefly indebted to our illustrious countryman, Newton. From the exposition of the laws of one single agent, the force of gravitation, all the movements of the solar system are developed, as well those of rotation as those which relate to their periodical revolutions, and even the anomalies and apparent irregularities are under the dominion and control of this power. Now, since we are satisfied of the existence of the principle of gravitation, and admit that it affects every atom of matter, we ought to examine the actions of bodies on each other at minute distances, with a view of finding what part of these actions is attributable to gravitation. Philosophers seem to have agreed to discard the operation of this force except at sensible distances ; but if gravitation be not the sole agent, it must needs, at these exceedingly small distances, act a very distinguished and important part, in producing the changes which are constantly going on in nature. Do not lose sight of gravitation ; and, by pursuing this thread, you will be guided through the mazes of a most intricate labyrinth to a situation exceedingly near the seat of its activity. Here it will be seen that the whole mass of force presents its resistance equally, uniformly, and with immense effect on every side ; consequently this centre has every property of a solid substratum, and there is no imaginable use, as far as we can perceive, for a solid nucleus, which is not answered by this concentrated force, this itself forms the solid part of matter. It is not here supposed that force acts against nothing, but against another opposing force ; we know nothing of matter, but by the forces which it exerts, and which doubtless constitute its nature. Does any one ask, What is matter, and what is force ? It may be answered, Matter is force applied and exerted in a peculiar way ; and, reciprocally, force operating in a certain mode

constitutes matter. Is the inquiry pursued, What is this force applied and exerted so as to constitute matter? We cannot tell what is its essential nature, more than this, that it is a power acting against a similar power, and may be greater or less than the other, or equal to it, being, as far as it respects matter, a wonderful act of the ever-living God, who worketh all things according to the counsels of his will. Every atom of matter, as will be seen from the view we have given of it, was created or brought into existence by an operation of the almighty power of God, and continues to exist by his continued act, either immediate or mediate; for the same power, which first produced this substance, is requisite to sustain or uphold it in existence. The inconceivable myriads of atoms which are contained in bodies, tend to excite astonishment, and present before us an inexpressible sublimity. Here we see the act of creation and conservation; and, when we extend our views to the innumerable huge bodies which compose the universe, and to the multiplied millions of millions of atoms in each, with the united actions of their concentrated forces, we are prepared to say, that power belongeth to God alone.

“There is no less evidence of supreme wisdom in the structure of matter; the law of force, which constitutes its actions, is adapted peculiarly to preserve the existence and constant harmony of the universe. The same law of force is equally subservient to maintain the beautiful order and motions of systems of worlds, and to regulate the various changes and modifications which bodies and atoms are designed to undergo in their connexions and combinations with each other. The all-powerful hand of the Creator would certainly have constituted matter with forces varying by other very different laws; but we can conceive of none which could have so

completely answered the great ends of creation in the constitution of the universe, and the regulations and organizations of its several parts. The same wisdom is seen in the variety of the atoms of matter, and the proportions of each sort ; none are in defect, none in excess ; and from the nature of their constituent forces there is a constant tendency to preserve the established order of things, according to the all-wise and infinite design. We are easily led to perceive that it was in the mind of the Creator to form beings more elevated in nature than mere matter ; hence he has superadded a principle superior to that which has been the subject of this treatise—I mean vegetable life. This, whatever it is, is associated with the seed of the plant, and directs the combinations of common matter, when put into suitable circumstances, according to the nature and species of the vegetable which is to be unfolded and matured. The principle of animal life is still more dignified. This principle is hid in the ovum, as that of the vegetable is in the seed. It directs the growth of the animal, as well as the peculiarities of its shape and organs ; and the development of these reciprocally aids the principle itself, which becomes capable of supporting and directing wonderful movements, actions, and instincts. The result shows that the Omnipotent Creator has purposed to form a being who should possess a nature far more transcendent than that of the mere animal ; one possessing an intelligent mind, capable of surveying his works, and of rising from the survey of these to their great Author. This did not escape the notice of the Roman poet, as stated in those well-known lines,—

Sanctius his animal, mentisque capacius altæ—

\* \* \* \* \*

Finxit in effigiem moderantum cuncta Deorum.

Pronaque cum spectent animalia cætera terram,  
 Os homini sublime dedit ; cælumque tueri  
 Jussit, et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.

OVID, *Metam.* lib. i., l. 76.

“ A creature of a more exalted kind  
 Was wanting yet, and then was man designed :  
 Conscious of thought, of more capacious breast,  
 For empire formed, and fit to rule the rest :—  
 Thus while the mute creation downward bend  
 Their sight, and to their earthly mother tend,  
 Man looks aloft, and with erected eyes  
 Beholds his own hereditary skies.”

DRYDEN.

“The material part of the earth is adapted to nourish and maintain the vegetable world, and this serves to support the animal kingdom, while the whole contributes to the maintenance and pleasure of man in his present state. But the intelligent and rational principle is capable of more elevated enjoyments and exercises in the pursuit of truth, and the discernment of right and wrong ; and still more in yielding due homage to his Creator, and in presenting cordial expressions of gratitude, veneration, and worship.

“ It is very observable, however, that some disorder has affected the human race. We search in vain in the book of nature to ascertain either the cause or remedy of this evil. Revelation alone furnishes this most important of all knowledge. The sacred Scriptures show us the path of life, and direct us in the right use and management of nature in general, as it respects the promotion of our present and future felicity.”

All these things prove that there is a God not only infinitely powerful and intelligent, but also kind and merciful, working all things according to the counsel of his will, and causing all his operations to result in the benefit of his creatures. They prove also that God is continually

present, supporting all things by his energy ; and that while his working is manifest, his ways are past finding out. Yet as far as he may be known, we should endeavour to know him ; for “ he that cometh unto God, must know that he is.” Without this it is not likely that any man will serve him ; for those alone who know him seek him ; and they only who put their trust in him can testify that “ he is the rewarder of them who diligently seek him.”

The EIGHT PROPOSITIONS included in the argument *à priori* are formed totally independently of all considerations of the Divine Being in reference to his *acts* ; that is, to his attributes in *energetic operation* becoming *causes* of certain or any *effects*. They discover his *being* and several of his *perfections*, independently of his *works*. His *being* and *perfections*, argued from *creation*, *providence*, and *redemption*, belong to the argument *à posteriori*. Now though the above-mentioned propositions were conceived, stated, and argued, as if there were neither creation nor providence—nor even the existence of a revelation ; yet by them his being, eternal, unoriginated, and independent, with many of his essential attributes, are clearly demonstrated ; and thus far we can go, being led by what is called the light of nature ; and it must be as edifying as it is pleasing to find that the Holy Scriptures assert precisely the same things of this Being. So that we have not only those things from revelation which we have been able to find out by reason or the light of nature, but beside them a multitude of others which lie far beyond the verge and limits of reason, or the light of nature—such as the creation, fall and redemption of man, the immortality of the soul, future rewards and punishments, &c., &c. This is no mean proof that the Bible is from God, and that what is called the light of nature is a ray from the infinite splen-

dour of the eternal Sun of wisdom and righteousness. And thus both reason and revelation illustrate each other, and conjoin to point out that infinite Source of being and beneficence who is alone the Supreme Good of man.

To show that, without having any kind of reference to it, the Scripture proclaims those essential and important things found out by the arguments *à priori*, take the following examples:—

1. The Scriptures assert that there is *only one God*, Deut. iv. 39, vi. 4; 2 Sam. vii. 22; Ps. lxxxvi. 10; Jer. x. 10, 11, xlv. 5; Matt. xix. 17; John xvii. 3; 1 Cor. viii. 4—6; 1 Tim. ii. 5, vi. 15.

2. That this God is a Being of all *possible perfections*, Matt. v. 48; 1 Chron. xxix. 11; Ps. viii. 1.

3. That this God is the *Creator of all things*, Gen. i. 1; Ps. xxxiii. 6; Acts xiv. 17; Heb. xi. 3.

4. That he is OMNISCIENT, i. e., perfectly *wise*, and *knows all things*, Job ix. 4; 1 Tim. i. 17; Isai. xl. 13, 14; 1 Sam. ii. 3; Job xxxvi. 4, xlii. 2; Ps. cxlvii. 5; Jer. xxxii. 19; Acts xv. 18.

5. That he is an *eternal SPIRIT*, John iv. 24; Heb. xi. 27; 1 Tim. vi. 16; Deut. xxxiii. 27; Ps. xc. 2.

6. That he is OMNIPRESENT, 1 Kings viii. 27; Ps. cxxxix. 7—10; Jer. xxiii. 24.

7. That he is OMNIPOTENT, Jer. xxxii. 17; Rev. xix. 6; Ps. cxlv. 3; Job ix. 4, &c.; 1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12.

8. That he is IMMUTABLE, Exod. iii. 14; Mal. iii. 6; Heb. i. 10—12; James i. 17.

9. That he is INCOMPREHENSIBLE, Job xi. 7; Ps. cxxxix. 6; Eccles. iii. 11, viii. 17; 1 Tim. vii. 16; Rom. xi. 33.

10. That he is essentially good, Ps. lii. 1, cxlv. 9; Matt. xix. 17; James i. 17; Exod. xxxiv. 6; 1 John iv. 8.

11. That he is TRUE and FAITHFUL to all his engagements, Numb. xxiii. 19 ; Deut. vii. 9 ; 2 Sam. vi. 28 ; Tit. i. 2.

12. That he is infinitely PURE and HOLY, Isai. vi. 3, xliii. 15, lvii. 15 ; Ps. cxlv. 17 ; Rev. xv. 4.

13. That he is infinitely JUST, Ps. xxxvi. 6, cxxix. 4, cxix. 137 ; Rom. ii. 6 ; Acts x. 34, 35 ; Rev. xv. 3.

14. That his PROVIDENCE is not only *general* but *particular*, governing and preserving all things, Ps. xxxvi. 6, civ., cvii., cxxxvi. 25, cxlv. 13, &c. ; Job xii. 10 ; Acts xiv. 17, xvii. 28 ; Matt. x. 29, 30.

15. That he *loves* MAN *especially*, and presses all the operations of all *inanimate* and *animate beings* into his service, Prov. xvi. 33 ; Ps. lxxv. 9, &c., civ. 13—30, cxlv. 15, 16, 33, cxlvii. 16, 18 ; Amos iii. 6, iv. 7 ; Job xxxvii., xxxviii., xxxix. For all creatures, whether corporeal or incorporeal, animal or spiritual, not only owe their being to God, but they owe also their efficacy to produce any effect to the agency of a divine power in and upon them, as all creatures, every moment, depend upon God for the continuance of their existence.

See Doddridge and other writers on this argument.

#### SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

The providence of God, in renewing the wastes of nature, and in fructifying barren tracts, so as to make the wilderness a fruitful field, and even the sterile rocks a vegetable surface, is a subject of astonishing beauty and contrivance ; and as such is worthy of the contemplation of angels and men ; and is a sovereign proof of the being and love of the Great First Cause and Preserver of all things. In order to set this in a clear and impressive light, I borrow, gladly and gratefully, the following observations from a late periodical work.

“ Nothing can be more beautiful in itself, or more

deeply interesting to a reflecting mind, than the proofs by which nature constantly produces an accession of soil, and an accumulation of vegetable matter to render it fertile. The process is varied so as to be exactly adapted to overcome the obstacles which the circumstances of each particular district present ; but although the means employed are infinitely various, the final result is always the same. When the surface of a rock, for instance, becomes first exposed to the atmosphere, it is at once attacked by agents which operate on it, both mechanically and chemically. *Light* calls into activity the latent *heat* ; the pores become by that means sufficiently enlarged to admit particles of moisture, which gradually abrade the surface, and produce inequalities ; upon these inequalities the seeds of lichens and mosses are deposited by the atmosphere. These forerunners of vegetation take root, and the fibres by which some sorts of these diminutive plants adhere to the rock, concoct a vegetable acid, peculiarly adapted to corrode the substance with which it comes in contact, and increases the inequalities which heat and moisture had already formed. These diminutive plants decay and perish : when decomposed, they form a vegetable bed suited to the production of larger plants ; or when the surface of the rock happens to present clefts or natural crevices, they fall into them ; and there mingling with fine particles of sand conveyed thither by the atmosphere, or crumbled by the action of the air from the internal surfaces of the crevices themselves, they form fertile mould. Nature, having advanced thus far in her preparations, makes another forward step. She sows the soil which has been produced by the decomposition of vegetable matter, with some of the more perfect plants which it has now become capable of sustaining. These continue to be produced and decomposed, until a soil has been prepared of sufficient depth and richness to bear



plants of still higher quality and larger dimensions. The process of nature requires accelerated force as it advances towards its consummation. When a sufficient depth of soil has been formed, to produce ferns for instance, these annually decay and die ; their decomposed materials gradually form little conical heaps of vegetable mould round the spot on which each plant grew. When this has gone on for a period of sufficient length to spread these cones over a given surface, nature takes another stride ; she sows furze, thorns, and briars, which thrive luxuriantly, and by annually shedding their leaves, contribute in the end to add greatly to both the depth and fertility of the mould. This species constitutes, in truth, the means which nature principally uses in preparing a bed for the growth of the more valuable trees. It is well known that these are the plants which make their first appearance in fallows, or in woods which have been recently cut down. Into the centre of a tuft of brambles is accidentally carried the seed of the majestic oak ; meeting with a congenial soil, it soon vegetates ; it is carefully and effectually cherished and protected by its prickly defence, against all injuries from the bite of the animals which roam over the waste. The larger trees having reached a height and size which render shelter unnecessary, destroy their early nurses and protectors, by robbing them of the light and the air indispensable for their well being. The thorny plants then retire to the outskirts of the forests, where, in the enjoyment of an abundant supply of light and sun, they continue gradually to extend the empire of their superiors, and make encroachments upon the plain until the whole district becomes at length covered with magnificent trees. The roots of the larger trees penetrate the soil in all directions ; they even find their way into the crevices of the rocks, fitted as these are already by decomposed

vegetable matter ; here they swell and contract as the heat and moisture increase or diminish. They act like true levers, until they gradually pulverize the earthy materials which they have been able to penetrate. While the roots are thus busy underground, boring, undermining, cleaving, and crumbling everything that impedes their progress, the branches and leaves are equally indefatigable overhead. They arrest the volatile particles of vegetable food which float in the atmosphere. Thus fed and sustained, each tree, not only increases annually in size, but produces and deposits a crop of fruit and leaves. The fruit becomes the food of animals, or is carried into a spot where it can produce a new plant ; the leaves fall around the tree, where they become gradually decomposed, and in the lapse of ages make a vast addition to the depth of the vegetable mould ; whilst the decomposition of vegetables makes a gradual addition to the depth of the cultivatable soil, another cause, equally constant in operation, contributes to increase its fertility—the produce of the minutest plants serves to subsist myriads of insects ; after a brief existence, these perish and decay ; their decomposed particles greatly fertilize the vegetable matter with which they happen to mingle. The period at last arrives when the timber, having reached its highest measure of growth and perfection, may be cut down, in order that the husbandman may enter upon the inheritance prepared for him by the hand of the all-wise and all-beneficent Author of his existence. Such is the system which they who have eyes to see, may see. Plants which appear worthless in themselves—those lichens, mosses, heaths, ferns, furze, briars, and brooms, in which economists, forsooth, perceive only the symbols of eternal barrenness—are so many instruments employed by perfect wisdom in fertilizing new

districts for the occupation of future generations of mankind :—

‘ The course of nature is the art of God.’

“The constant depasturing of cattle on wastes and commons counteracts the means which Providence makes use of in producing fertility ; and, in consequence, greatly retards the period when the soil becomes sufficiently deep for agricultural purposes. There is not, perhaps, a healthy waste which would not become a forest, were the commoners restrained from setting their flocks upon it.

“It is a well-known fact, that wherever trees of any particular species have fallen into decay, other trees of the same species will not naturally thrive : for instance, when a forest of firs falls naturally into decay, it is never found to be succeeded by another crop of firs, but by birch, oaks, or other species congenial to the soil which the fir-wood had formed. Therefore oaks should not be planted to supply the place of oaks already cut down from that place ; no more than wheat should be sowed in the same field where wheat grew in the preceding year. Plantations should be encouraged on all waste and common lands. In such, we behold the most efficient means which could have been adopted towards covering these barren tracts with a depth of soil adequate for the purpose of husbandry. Many of the trees ordinarily planted, and more especially the larch, are known to destroy the heath, and to afford a shelter highly favourable to the growth of nutritious grasses.”—See No. of the *Quarterly Review*, p. 438.

There is no land, howsoever sterile, which, by judicious draining or planting, may not become of the utmost benefit to man. Nature is God’s agent ; but he

has given man understanding to be a co-worker with this agent, and to direct and help her operations. Art may not only embellish nature, but, by the assistance of industry, render her still more abundantly fruitful.

If God has said, "In the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat bread," he has, even in this, strongly intimated that the man who industriously plies his tillage, though to lassitude and sweat, shall have bread to eat.

Thus, then, the sun, moon, planets, rain, dew, snow, trees, herbs, shrubs, funguses, and vegetable excrescences of every kind ; all the smaller animals, and most despicable insects ; grass, corn, oil, water, fire ; the brutes and the angels, which were all made by and depend upon him, are the servants of man. And thus reason and revelation conjoin to prove that there is a God ; that he is good ; that he hateth nothing that he hath made ; that he is loving to every man ; that he would have none perish, or be wretched ; and that he is "the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." See Dodridge, Clarke, &c.

## SERMON XXX.

### THE CORRUPTION THAT IS IN THE WORLD THROUGH LUST.

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2 PETER i. 3, 4.

3. Ὡς παντα ἡμιν της θειας δυναμεως αυτου τα προς ζωην και ευσεβειαν δεδωρημενης, δια της επιγνωσεως του καλεσαντος ἡμας δια δοξης και αρετης,

4. Δι' ὧν τα μεγαιστα ἡμιν και τιμια επαγγελματα δεδωρηται, ινα δια τουτων γενησθε θειας κοινωνοι φυσεως, αποφυγοντες της εν κοσμφ εν επιθυμια φθορας.

3. "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue (or καλεσαντος ἡμας ιδια δοξη και αρετη by his own glory and power) :

4. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

In order to enter into the full meaning and force of the apostle's words, it is necessary to consider,—

I. The *people* to whom the apostle wrote, both as to their *external* and *internal* state.

II. The *moral state of society*, and of the world, in the time in which these lived. It was *corrupt*, internally and externally,—totally fallen from God and righteousness.

III. The *source* whence this corruption proceeded :—  
LUST, ἐπιθυμία, *evil* DESIRE; intensely strong and irregular.

IV The *prospect* there was of being *saved* from this corruption; the exceeding great and precious promises of God that they should escape from it.

V The *end* to which they were called, God's own glory and virtue; or, *by* his glory and virtue as the *means*, to his glory and virtue as the *end*; and for which they should be prepared by a participation of the divine nature.

I. Of the *people* to whom the apostle wrote, both as to their *external* and *internal* state.

1. The people to whom these words are addressed were evidently composed of Gentile converts, and Jews who had received the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ; and apparently under persecution by the unbelieving Jews; for if they were, as is generally supposed, the same with those to whom the First Epistle is addressed, they “were *strangers* scattered abroad” throughout various provinces of Asia Minor; viz., Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia (that of which Ephesus was the capital), and Bithynia. Now, though the word *strangers*, παρῆδημοι, may refer to all truly religious people, as it seems to be in Gen. xlvii. 9, Ps. xxxix. 12 (see Septuagint), and Heb. xi. 13, yet the inscription appears to have a special reference to those who were driven by persecution to seek refuge in those heathen provinces, to which the influence of their persecuting brethren did not extend. And it is most probable that they were not *natives* of those countries, for they are here called παρῆδημοις διασπορας, “strangers of the dispersion, in Pontus,” &c. And this title the Jews gave to their countrymen who were dispersed through different provinces of the Greek

empire, founded by Alexander the Great, in Greece, Syria, Egypt, and Asia Minor, where the Greek language prevailed, and where the Jewish Scriptures, in the Greek version of the Septuagint, were read. Hence, when our Lord, who was persecuted by the Jews, said (John vii. 34), "Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am ye cannot come," they answered, "Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? Will he go unto the DISPERSED among the Gentiles (*εις την διασποραν των Ἑλληνων*), and teach them?" ver. 35. And that this word was applied to those who, being persecuted on account of their receiving the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, were driven from their native country, appears from Acts xi. 19: "Now they which *were scattered abroad*, *οἱ διασπαρευντες*, upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to the Jews only;" and "some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene." See Acts viii. 1, where this dispersion of the church at Jerusalem is mentioned.

I conclude, therefore, that the "strangers of the dispersion," mentioned above, were such as I have already described, some of them converted Jews, others converted Gentiles, all suffering for righteousness' sake, and all fleeing from the face of persecution into strange lands, according to the directions of our Lord: "When they persecute you in one city, flee unto another," &c. Matt. x. 23. Which direction was illustrated in his own history, and by his own conduct. When Herod sought to kill the young child of whom the wise men spake, "the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: and he arose and departed into Egypt," Matt. iv. 13—15. "Now when Jesus had heard

that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee," Matt. iv. 12. "Then the Pharisees went out and held a council against him, how they might destroy him. But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence," Matt. xii. 14, 15. This people, therefore, as to their *external* circumstances, appear to have been in a state of suffering and exile, occasioned, most probably, by the persecution raised up against Christianity by the unbelieving Jews.

2. As to their *internal* state, we shall see it at once in the apostle's address: they were a people who were "chosen of God, through the sanctification of the Spirit; obedient to the truth of the gospel; and had received the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus; had a living hope of eternal glory; and were kept by the power of God through faith," 1 Pet. i. 1—5. They were indeed persecuted, and variously afflicted, but they bore those evils not only with patience and fortitude, but with joy and thanksgiving, through the strength of that love which they received from and bore to the God of their lives and their mercies, ver. 8. They, as Gentiles, had received like precious faith with the Jews; did not live under any inferior dispensation of the Divine Spirit; found themselves invested with the same religious privileges as those possessed by the most faithful of the children of Abraham; and the believing Jews now found their former moon-like privileges changed into those which might be compared to the sun going forth in the brightness of his rising, and the might of his strength. They had received like precious faith with the apostles and their converts, the first-born of the Lord, 2 Pet. i. 1, &c. And it was no small privilege to the Gentiles to find that they were made fellow-heirs with the Jews of the grace of life; and had the gifts and graces of the



Divine Spirit poured out upon them, as they had been on the Jews at the beginning.

3. Though persecuted and driven to strange countries, the eye of God's providence was over them, to discover their wants and provide for their necessities ; and the hand of his mercy was open to dispense all those spiritual blessings of which they stood in need ; and so his divine power gave them all things that pertained to life and godliness. They were troubled on every side, yet not distressed ; they were perplexed, but not abandoned to despair ; they were persecuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed, 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9. They found the truth of that word, "All things shall work together for good to them that love God." Their enemies put forth their wrath, but that wrath was so counterworked by the providence and grace of God, that it praised God ; and the "remainder of it he restrained." How vain were the attempts of men and devils to destroy the light of the gospel by persecution and death ! In spite of these it grew ; and under them it flourished ! The gates of hell, though opened wide to pour out all its hosts, could not prevail against it ; and persecution, like a good broad-cast sowing, dispersed the seed of eternal life throughout the world. The persecuted went every where preaching the word of the truth of the gospel ; and had not the primitive Christians been burnt out by persecution at Jerusalem, humanly speaking, it would have been a long time before Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy could have heard the words of eternal life. Satan and his children persecuted and drove them from city to city. One company ran and sowed the good seed of the kingdom ; another, driven by the same agency, followed after them, and watered the seed ; and God continued to reap a plentiful harvest. Never was the

wise and experienced devil farther out in his calculations, than when he counted on the destruction of Christianity by fire and sword. Under him, the Jews distinguished themselves in the first instance, and instead of casting down Christianity, they stumbled and fell, and rose no more ! Heathen Rome followed in the same track ; the sword, the fire, the axe, the gibbet, with the fangs and teeth of ferocious beasts, were tried in vain ; and at last, by the power of Christianity, she and her idols, and her instruments of cruelty, were defeated and cast down, even down to the ground. Papal Rome, having apostatized from the spirit and power of the gospel, copied her ancient mother, and most grievously persecuted all who held the truth of God, against corrupt doctrines and the uncertain traditions of men ; but she prevailed not ; the secular and spiritual power were conjoined to annihilate those who testified against its corruptions and its crimes ; and now, that truth, which entered a solemn protest against those corruptions, is rapidly spreading over the earth ; and by it more than half the world has received that heavenly light concentrated in the BIBLE, which that church had first obscured by false interpretations, and at last violently snatched out of the hands of the people. But God has reclaimed his own word, and delivered it over to mankind ; and they who would not walk in the light, but persecuted to death those who did, are now consigned to their native weakness, darkness, frippery, and folly ; and her secular power is cast down for ever : and after ruling the earth with her iron sceptre, she has vanished, as a *power*, from the nations of the earth ! Where now is her terror ? Where now is her fear, and where her respect ? The mighty angel has taken up the stone, like a great mill-stone, and cast it into the sea, saying, “ Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no

more at all! Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her; for in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth," Rev. xviii. 20—24. While we say, "Alas, alas! for this great city!" let us pray that, while her antichristian power is crushed and dissolved, a Christian Rome may arise, clothed with the sun, having the moon under her feet; and thus, illustrated with sound doctrine, unspotted holiness, and useful learning, be once more respectable among the nations, and a blessing to the earth! Amen, amen!

II. Let us consider the moral state of society, and of the world, in the time in which those pious persecuted people lived.

It was CORRUPT, internally and externally; it was totally fallen from God, and from original righteousness. This state the apostle points out in these words, "The CORRUPTION that is in the world;" *της εν κοσμω—φθορας*. The word originally means to reduce to disorder, to decompose the component parts of a thing by putrefaction, such as takes place in the human body by death. *It is sown* (says the apostle) *in corruption*, *σπειρεται εν φθορα*, it dies, is deposited in the earth, rots or putrefies; is quite decomposed in all its parts; becomes nauseous and horrible, totally loses its form; in a word, is destroyed, i. e., is pulled down, and the once fair and comely mansion is seen no more! The word, taken metaphorically, signifies moral corruption and destruction, and is applied to those who act profligately, so that all evidence of original righteousness appears to be destroyed in them, together with every semblance of faith and virtue. In a word, it points out the carnal mind that is enmity against God; the old man that is corrupt, with its affections and

desires, and all the moral evil consequences of the fall of man. This was the state not only of the Gentiles, but of the Jews ; for all flesh (the whole of the human race) had corrupted its way ; none did righteousness, no, NOT ONE ! Well might a Christian in such times, and among such people, be considered a new creature—a human being of a different species to any ever seen in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, or Bithynia. All the rest were corrupted and corruptors ; purposing, working, and living in the corruption that is in the world—that prevailed not only universally among them, but in the whole habitable globe besides. And these dreadful propensities reigned in the heathen world without check or control—nothing could resist their overwhelming influence ; and there was no cure in the wisdom of man for this universal contagion, for the world by wisdom knew not God. The whole world lay in the wicked one, and none but the all-conquering Lord could drag this lost world out of the arms of Apollyon, cancel the sin, and cleanse the corrupt heart.

1. All were internally corrupt : the whole system of passions, appetites, faculties, and mental powers was in a state of uncleanness, disorder, and confusion. All the imaginations of the thoughts of the hearts of men were evil, only evil, and that continually, Gen. vi. 5, &c. And no wonder, for the image of God was erased from the soul ; the Satanic image took its place, and thus the heart became deceitful and desperately wicked, indescribably and inconceivably so : for God alone can fully know the depth of the wickedness of the human heart.

2. All were externally corrupt ; for in consequence of the fallen state of man, and the internal wickedness of his heart, the earth was filled with violence. The evil principle showed itself by evil practices ; and as the

carnal mind is enmity against God, so is it enmity against man ; every man carries in himself naturally a foeman's heart ; and hence disputes, contentions, strifes, variance, emulations, hatred, malice, battery, private murders, and public wars ! With these were associated what may be called domestic evils, adulteries, fornications, lasciviousness, uncleanness, with drunkenness, revellings, and such like : all these proceeding directly from the corruption of the human heart. This corruption was in the world, and is still in the world ; but it is now, in some respects, curbed by the gospel ; and yet, in every case where the *bit* of legal restraint is taken out of their mouth, or the reins of public authority and discipline are slackened, the evil becomes manifest ; and thus every unregenerate man shows himself to be a child of corruption, a fallen spirit intent on the gratification of the flesh, and capable of all mischief. And yet, with all this proneness to sin and fellness of disposition, wretched man will affect to be a religious creature ! He will have a God ! this God shall have his worship, and his peculiar rites ! But where shall this God be found ! The poor human fool makes one with his own hands, gives it attributes according to his own heart ; and offers it a worship in which all the carnalities of his own apostate nature are gratified ! Thus his system of idolatry is at once the evidence, the proof, the fosterer, and support of his corrupt nature. And hence in no system of idolatry, or worship invented by man, could there ever be found a moral cure for sin ; as all the figments of false worship sprung from the corrupt principle in the mind ; and it cannot be supposed that the stream should rise higher than the fountain ; or that an effect could destroy its cause : hence arises the nullity of all false religion as to its beneficial moral effects upon either individuals or society. Where such religions find man, there they leave him ; but as they

proceed from the corrupt spirit, and are framed for the gratification of the corrupt appetite, they foster the seeds of vice ; and thus the devotee becomes more animal, more sensual, more devilish, proceeding from worse to worse, till the heart becomes totally hardened through the deceitfulness of sin ; till the human being disappears, and the beast and the devil, in a fearful combination, occupy the place of man !

As there is no effect without its cause, and this moral corruption is evidently an effect, we should now consider—

III. The source or fountain whence this corruption proceeds.

The apostle has not left us to seek this from conjecture ; he mentions the thing itself: “The corruption that is in the world through LUST,” *εν επιθυμια*. When we can ascertain what the precise meaning of this term is, we shall then know whence this corruption has flowed, and how it is maintained in the world.

The term *lust*, used by our translators here, is defined by our best lexicographers, “desire, inclination, will, carnal desire, any violent or irregular passion.” It comes to us from the Teutonic, through the Anglo-Saxon, *lurτ*, from *lurτan*, to desire, to delight, or be delighted ; but neither in the Anglo-Saxon, German, or Dutch, in all of which it exists in the same meaning, does it signify carnal or libidinous desire, which we generally mean by lust, unless joined by some other word to qualify it to this sense, or fix it to such a meaning : as *boτe lurτ*, base, low, bad, or impure desire. And St. Paul seems to qualify the word *επιθυμια* in the same way, to give it that meaning which the simple word generally bears among us ; e. g., 1 Thess. iv. 5. “Not in the lust of concupiscence,” *μη εν παθει επιθυμιας*, *not in passionate desire*,

as it is most correctly translated by the Rev. J. Wesley, who gives the word *επιθυμία* the same meaning, *desire*, which the word *לרצ*, *lust*, had in our ancient mother-tongue, and which our translators have given it in several parts of the Bible, of which the following are proofs. In Numb. xi. 4, it is said that “the people fell a lusting and said, Who will give us flesh to eat?” Now this lusting, or as the margin has it, *lusted a lust* (הִתְאָוַר תְּאֻוָּה *hitharu taaveh*, “earnestly desired a desire,”) was simply an intense desire for flesh meat, instead of that aërial substance called manna, of which they were now weary ; and to meet this desire, which in itself was not criminal, the Lord worked a surprising miracle ! By the same word is often expressed a desire which is perfectly innocent, and the object of it perfectly lawful ; see Deut. xii. 15 : “Thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee ;” see also verses 20, 21. We see therefore that the word *lust* is used to express, not only an innocent desire, but a desire that has for its object a lawful thing ; and the lawfulness of the thing, and the innocence of the desire, are proved by the permission of God to use that abundantly which his good providence had provided for them. It was thus commonly used among our ancient writers. So in SPENSER’S *Shepherd’s Calendar* for July, in the *Eclogue* of Thomalin and Morrel, “made,” as the argument says, “in the honour and commendation of good shepherds ; and to the shame and dispraise of proud and ambitious pastors.”—Morrel speaks :

“What ho, thou jolly shepherd’s swain,  
Come up the hill to me ;  
Better is, than the lowly plain,  
Als for thy sheep and thee.”

Among other things Thomalin answers,—

“ But if thee *lust* to holden chat  
 With seely shepherd’s swain,  
 Come down, and hear the little what,  
 That Thomalin can sain.”

That is,—

Let the popish priests descend from their assumed uninterrupted succession, and self-originated authority, and if they wish to hear what protestant pastors have to say in behalf of the purity of their doctrine, and their divine call, let them lay aside their secular sword, and fire and fagot, and taking the even ground of the Scripture, defend themselves with the sword of the Spirit, if they can draw and wield it.

Some learned men have had recourse to the Greek for the meaning of the word *lust*, and as *λωιστος* and *λωστος*, signify the chiefest and best, so no man in making a choice will wish to possess himself of that which is least or worst, but of that which is the best. So *lust* signifies the earnest desire to possess that which is chief or best of the things proposed to one’s election.

From the nature of the term, and the way in which it has been employed by the people into the composition of whose language it enters, we may see satisfactorily that it originally expressed simple desire, and, in process of time, strong or intense desire; and at last, among ourselves, was and is used to express such a desire or wish as springs from impure and carnal affections; but this exclusive sense is not that in which St. Peter uses the word. His word *επιθυμια*, compounded of *επι*, *upon*, or taken intensively, and *θυμος*, *mind*, thought, or desire; strong excitement of mind, as in anger, &c.; it must imply strong desire, desire upon desire; an earnestness of wishing, in order to enjoyment.



I have dwelt the longer on this word, because of the use which I think my text authorizes me to make of it. And to come more directly to its meaning in St. Peter, we should compare it with what St. John says, who uses not only the same words, but evidently in the same sense. He exhorts the Christians of his time thus : 1 Epist. ii. 15, 16 : "Love not the world, nor the things in the world ; for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world ; and the world passeth away, and the lust thereof ; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." From these and other considerations we shall see, that from simple desire, irregularly exercised, all the other evils have flowed. And as the term *desire*, which is an act of the mind, should be well understood, I will take its definition from Mr. Locke. "DESIRE is the uneasiness a man finds in himself, upon the absence of anything whose present enjoyment carries the idea of delight with it : " and " desire is greater or less, according as the uneasiness is more or less ardent : " and I may add that uneasiness is more or less ardent in proportion to the conviction a man has of the necessity, importance, and benefit to be derived from the thing which is the object of his desire. Let us keep this definition in view, and we shall be soon convinced, from a careful examination of this operation of the human heart, that originally from it arose all the evil that is in man ; and we may discern how that evil first entered into the world.

The account given by Moses of the creation, temptation, and fall of man, is the only information we have on those momentous subjects. He tells us that God created man in his own image and likeness. And St. Paul tells us, that that image consisted in righteousness, truth, and holiness ; therefore there could be no evil in the mind or

disposition of man ; no enmity to God ; no feeling, as there was no knowledge, of SIN : it had not yet existed, but only in fallen angels. By whom it entered into the world, the same record teaches ; the devil, the prince of fallen spirits, taking for his instrument a creature called *nachash*, which we translate *serpent*, that seems to have had the gift both of speech and reason, having learned that God, as a test of obedience, had forbidden the first human pair to eat the fruit of a particular tree that grew in the midst of the garden of paradise, used that very prohibition as the means of deceiving the woman, and of leading her to transgress. God had said, "In the day thou eatest of it, thou shalt surely die." Satan questions this :—"Indeed ! hath God said, If thou eat of it, thou shalt surely die ?" The woman repeats the prohibition. Satan answers, "Thou shalt not surely die : " as if he had said, "Thou art immortal, God created thee such ; thy death is impossible—thy Creator wishes to deprive thee of a great and important good ; as he knows that as soon as ye eat of this fruit, ye shall get such a wonderful increase of knowledge, that ye shall be like unto himself, knowing good and evil." Hence it appears that the object of the tempter was to persuade our first parents that they should, by eating of this fruit, become wise and powerful like God (for knowledge is power), and be able to exist for ever, independently of him ; and as they had lived by the tree of life, so they imagined they would get wisdom by the tree of knowledge.

Let us see now how simple desire, by means of appetite, operated to lead into transgression. "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eye ; and that it was a tree to be desired to make one wise : she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also to her husband who was with her, and he did eat." First, the fruit appeared to her to

be wholesome and nutritive: "she saw that it was good for food.\* Secondly, it was beautiful to look on, and the fairness of the fruit tended to excite and increase appetite. Thirdly, "it was to be desired to make one wise," which was an additional motive to please the palate. We may presume, and the facts of the case prove it, that she felt at first simple desire, and by keeping her eyes upon the object, would soon find in herself "that uneasiness on the absence or non-possession of a thing, the present enjoyment of which carried with it the idea of delight." Therefore, she took it, and did eat. From those three sources, all natural and moral evil sprang: and they are exactly what the apostle John calls, 1. "The desire of the flesh :"—they were good for food. 2. "The desire of the eyes :"—it was pleasant to the sight. 3. Hence arose the pride of life: for it was a "tree to be desired to make one wise;" and the affectation of wisdom is that in which man boasts beyond all other possessions. Under the influence of this desire, working in this threefold way, the prohibition of their Maker seems to have been forgotten. The transgression had a fatal effect upon their minds; the harmony of the soul was lost; animal desires, for more such gratifications, began to work tumultuously; all prohibition seemed only a check upon reasonable desires and enjoyment; and under such feeling, they pressed forward from simple enjoyment to sensual gratification; and from gratification to excess. Hence reason was overwhelmed by animal feelings; desire was built on desire; indulgence produced still more extensive demand, and they soon withheld their heart from no joy. Order was no longer felt—disorder prevailed. The understanding was darkened, and they did not like to retain God in their knowledge. The spirit of holiness, of order, harmony, and pure love, abandoned a habitation in which it could no

longer reside ; and with it righteousness, truth, and holiness took their flight. The image of God was defaced, and the whole man became a mass of moral corruption. Hence, corruption entered into the world through lust ; lust conceived and brought forth sin ; sin was finished, and brought forth death. Thus, from simple desire, irregularly exercised, sprang the loss of Eden, loss of holiness, loss of God, and loss of happiness. By the envy of the devil sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and with them, the innumerable evils, both ghostly and bodily, that have turned the paradise of God into a howling wilderness, driven peace from the earth, filled the body with the seeds of disease and death, and the soul with the seeds of corruption and perdition. The families of man are living in a state of constant hostility to their fellows, so that one half of the inhabitants of the earth are destroyed by the other. The natural evil that is unavoidable is increased endlessly by the moral evil that works upon and through it ; insomuch that God can no longer take pleasure in the work of his own hands ! God had undoubtedly created our first parents not only very wise and intelligent, but also with a great capacity and suitable propensity to increase in knowledge. Those who maintain that Adam was created so perfect as to preclude the possibility of his increase in knowledge, have taken a very false view of the subject. We shall surely be convinced that our first parents were in a state of sufficient perfection, when we consider,

1. That they were endowed with a vast capacity to obtain knowledge.

2. That all the means of information were within their reach.

3. That there was no hinderance to the most direct conception of occurring truth.

4. That all objects of knowledge, whether natural or moral, were ever at hand.

5. That they had the strongest propensity to know,—the hunger and thirst after wisdom.

6. And the greatest pleasure in acquiring knowledge.

To have God and nature continually open to the view of the soul ; and to have a soul capable of viewing both, and fathoming, endlessly, their unbounded glories and excellencies, what a consummation of bliss ! This was undoubtedly the state and condition of our first parents ; even the present ruins of this state, like the *chehal minar*, or forty remaining pillars of Persepolis, are incontrovertible evidences of the glory and splendour of the original building.

We see at once how transgression came : It was natural for them to desire to be increasingly wise : God had planted this desire in their hearts ; but he had showed them that this desire should be gratified in a certain way, and that prudence and judgment should ever regulate it ; that they should carefully examine what God had opened to their view ; and should not pry into what he chooses to conceal. He alone who knows all things, knows how much knowledge the soul needs in order to its complete perfection and increasing happiness ; in what subjects this may be legitimately sought ; and where the mind may make excursions and discoveries to its prejudice and ruin. There are doubtless many subjects which angels are capable of knowing, and which God chooses to conceal even from them, because that knowledge would tend neither to their perfection nor happiness. Of every attainment and object of pursuit, it may be said, in the words of an ancient poet, who conceived correctly on the subject, and expressed his thoughts with perspicuity and energy :

Est modus in rebus : sunt certi denique fines,  
Quos ultra citroque nequit consistere rectum.

HORAT. Sat., lib. i., sat. i., ver. 106.

“ There is a rule for all things : there are, in fine, fixed and stated limits,  
On either side of which righteousness cannot be found !”

Such limits God certainly assigned from the beginning. “Thou mayest come up to this ; but thou shalt not pass it.” And, as he assigned the limits, so he assigned the means : It is lawful for thee to acquire knowledge in this way ; it is unlawful for thee to seek it in that. And had he not a right to do so ? And would his creation have been perfect without it ?

Let us review the whole of this melancholy business :

1. From the New Testament we learn that Satan associated himself with the creature which we term the serpent, and the original, the *nachash*, in order to seduce and ruin mankind, 2 Cor. xi. 3. Rev. xii. 9, xx. 2.

2. That this creature was the most suitable to his purpose, as being the most subtle, the most intelligent and cunning of all the beasts of the field, endued with the gift of speech and reason ; and, consequently, one in which the tempter could best conceal himself.

3. As he knew that while Adam and Eve depended on God they could not be ruined, he therefore endeavoured to seduce them from this dependance.

4. He did this by working on that propensity of the mind to desire an increase of knowledge, with which God, for the most gracious purpose, had endued it.

5. In order to succeed, he insinuated, that God, through motives of selfishness, had given the prohibition : “God doth know that in the day ye eat of it ye shall be like to himself,” &c.

6. As their present state of blessedness must be inexpressibly dear to them, he endeavoured to persuade

them that they could not fall from this state, “ Ye shall not surely die ;” ye shall not only retain your present blessedness, but it shall be greatly increased : a temptation by which he has ever since fatally succeeded in the ruin of multitudes of souls, whom he persuaded that being once right they could not finally go wrong.

7. As he kept the unlawfulness of the means proposed out of sight, persuaded them that they could not fall from their steadfastness, assured them that they should resemble God himself, and consequently, be self-sufficient and totally independent of him, they listened ; and fixing their eye only on the promised good, neglecting the positive command, and determining to become wise and independent at ALL EVENTS, they took of the fruit, and did eat ! Alas, alas ! how are the mighty fallen !

All the descendants of the first guilty pair resemble their degenerate ancestors, and copy their conduct. The original mode of transgression is still continued, and the original sin in consequence. Behold the proof !

1. Every human being is endeavouring to obtain knowledge by unlawful means, even while the lawful means and every available help are at hand.

2. They are endeavouring to be independent, and to live without God in the world ; hence prayer, the language of dependance on God’s providence and grace, is neglected, I might say detested, by the great majority of men.

3. Being destitute of the true knowledge of God, they seek privacy for their crimes, not considering that the eye of the Lord is upon them ; being only solicitous to hide them from the eye of man.

I need not add, how the *nachash*, the *woman*, and the *man* were sentenced and degraded ; the Bible is before the reader—let him read, understand, and reflect. He

will there see more, and more correctly, than the greatest of human poets has either conceived or sung,

“Of man’s first disobedience, and the fruit  
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste  
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,  
With loss of Eden.”

And he who undertakes to write on this fearful subject, should with no ordinary fervour offer the poet’s prayer :—

—————“What in me is dark  
Illumine ; what is low, raise and support  
That to the height of this great argument  
I may assert eternal Providence,  
And justify the ways of God to man.”

MILTON, *Parad. Lost*, b. i.

IV. I come now to consider the prospect which the most merciful God holds out, of being saved from this corruption, and its consequences ; “There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises.”

Man, having fallen into this state of excessive and shameful degradation by his own fault and folly, might have reasonably calculated on being left to sink lower, and yet lower still, into the bottomless pit of his own pollution ; destitute of help in himself, and of succour from that God of whose gifts and graces he had made such a fearful abuse : but God, who is rich in mercy, was pleased, with the sentence of degradation and punishment, to hold out, by a comparatively obscure promise, the restoration of his fallen soul to the glory he had lost, and the perfection which he had forfeited, by a disobedience to the simplest and easiest of commands, which without provocation, and without excuse, he had most shamefully transgressed : the promise, to which I have already referred, and which may be well denominated an exceeding great and precious promise, as in the text, is



the following: "And unto the serpent he said, I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," Gen. iii. 13.

The sequel shows us that this was a promise of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin ; "and being made man, he suffered, died, rose again from the dead, having obtained eternal redemption for us ;" and he commanded that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name through all nations ; for he saveth to the uttermost (from all the consequences of the fall) all them who come unto the Father through him." Thus, "God was manifested in the flesh," and by "the sufferings and death of this Divine Being upon the cross for our redemption, made there, by his one oblation of himself, once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world ;" and has commanded his gospel to be preached to all mankind, to show them that he, "Jesus Christ, has tasted death for every man ; that he ever waits to be gracious—that he willeth not the death of a sinner, but would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth,—and that whosoever cometh unto the Father by him, he will in no wise cast out."

These are general promises relative to what Christ has done for us ; but they are exceeding great and precious. There are, however, particular promises equally great and precious, which refer to the work which Christ is to do in us, in order to our escaping the corruption that is in the world, and the corruption that is in ourselves ; that, being saved from the "bondage of this corruption," and brought into the "glorious liberty of the

sons of God," we may "have our fruit unto holiness, and being filled with the fulness of God, have an abundant entrance into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." These are some of the "exceeding precious promises," to which the apostle in the text refers, and which are too well known to need the formal quotation of book, chapter, and verse, to persuade the reader that they are contained in the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

The Jews were distinguished in a very particular manner by the promises which they received from God—the promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and the prophets. God promised to be their God,—to support, protect, and save them; to give them what was emphatically called the PROMISED Land; and to cause the Messiah to spring from their race. Now, St. Peter intimates to the Gentiles, to whom he writes, that God had also given to them "exceeding great and precious promises;" indeed, all the promises which he had given to the Jews, the mere settlement in the Promised Land excepted; but this also he had given in all its spiritual meaning and force. And besides *τα μεγαιστα επαγγελματα*, those superlatively great promises, which distinguished the Mosaic dispensation, he had given them also *τα τιμια επαγγελματα*, the valuable promises, those which came through the Great Price; viz., Enrolment with the church of Christ; redemption in and through the blood of the cross; the continual indwelling influence of the Holy Spirit; the resurrection of the body, and eternal rest at the right hand of God. We may at once see that it was of considerable consequence to the comfort and stability of the Gentiles that these promises were made to them; and that salvation was not exclusively of the Jews.

In closely considering the Scriptures, we shall find that the "exceeding great and precious promises" were of two kinds, 1. Those which relate to what God pro-

mised to do *for* man ; and 2dly, Those which relate to what he will do *in* man. The promise of the Messiah, and everything connected with his incarnation, passion, death, and resurrection, were included in the first. The promise of the Holy Spirit, as the consequence of the incarnation, &c., to apply the blessings purchased, belongs to the second. By the first, all that was necessary in order to man's salvation was announced. By the second, all that was necessary in order to his glorification was promised.

To save the reader trouble, I shall set down a few of those "exceeding great and precious promises."

I. Relative to what Christ *was to do* FOR us.

II. Relative to what Christ *is to do* IN us, taken indifferently from the Old and New Testaments.

I. Promises relative to the salvation of man by Christ Jesus.

"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel ;" see Gen. iii. 15.

"Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people ; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord ;" Luke ii. 10, 11.

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost ;" Luke xix. 10.

"God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved ;" John iii. 17.

"Neither is there salvation in any other ; for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved ;" Acts iv. 12.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all accepta-

tion, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;" 1 Tim. i. 15.

"We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world;" 1 John iv. 14.

And that this salvation was to be by means of a vicarious offering of himself, is sufficiently evident from the following Scriptures:

"Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows,—he was wounded for our transgressions,—bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed,—the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all;" Isai. liii. 4—6.

"When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin,—the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands;" Isai. liii. 10.

"He shall see the travail of his soul,—by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities;" Isai. liii. 11.

"As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit;" Zech. ix. 11.

"The Son of Man came—to give his life a ransom for many;" Matt. xx. 28.

"For when we were yet without strength, Christ died for the ungodly. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement;" Rom. v. 6—11.

"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures;" 1 Cor. xv. 3.

"I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me;" Gal. ii. 20.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree;" Gal. iii. 13.

“Ye know that ye were—redeemed—with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot ;” 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree ;” 1 Pet. ii. 24.

“Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust ;” 1 Pet. iii. 18.

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins ;” 1 John iv. 10.

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins ;” Col. i. 14 ; Eph. i. 7.

“We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement ;” Rom. v. 11.

“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past ;” Rom. iii. 25 ; Eph. i. 7.

II. Promises relative to what Christ will do in believers.

“Ye are bought with a price,—glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God’s ;” 1 Cor. vi. 20.

“But God, who is rich in mercy, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ ;” Eph. ii. 4, 5.

“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works ;” Tit. ii. 14.

“For if the blood of bulls and of goats—sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh ; how much more shall the blood of Christ—purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God !” Heb. ix. 13, 14.

“For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision ; but faith which worketh by love ;” Gal. v. 6.

“He that believeth on me—out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water ; but this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive ;” John vii. 38, 39.

“He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ;” John xi. 25.

“He that hath the Son hath life ;” 1 John v. 12.

“In whom ye also are builded—a habitation of God through the Spirit ;” Eph. ii. 22.

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God ;” 1 Pet. ii. 5.

“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean : from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you ; a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you ; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh ; and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes ; and ye shall keep my judgments and do them ;” Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27.

“God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people : and I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and my daughters, saith the Lord Almighty ;” 2 Cor. vi. 16—18.

“Having therefore these promises,—let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God ;” 2 Cor. vii. 1.

“The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin ;” 1 John i. 7.

“These are they which came out of great tribulation,

and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb ;” Rev. vii. 14.

“ But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin ;” 1 John i. 7.

“ Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it,—that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish ;” Eph. v. 25—27

“ That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith ; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height ; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God ;” Eph. iii. 17—19.

“ And ye are complete in him (*και εστε εν αυτω πεπληρωμενοι*—And ye are filled with him), which is the head of all principality and power ;” Col. ii. 10.

These are some of the many “ exceeding great and precious promises, by which we may be made partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.” But the Bible is full of them, because the Bible shows the fall of man, and his recovery by Christ. And this recovery implies his being restored to the image of God in which he was created, and which by sin he lost. They, then, who are not restored to the image of God—righteousness and true holiness, are not profited by his sacrificial offering. None by saying, Lord, Lord, can enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but they who do the will of our Father who is in heaven ; and none can do that will whose hearts are not purified from all unrighteousness.

Let us review the whole subject: it is of infinite importance to mankind—

1. The CHRIST must become incarnate, teach, work miracles, suffer, die, rise again from the dead, explain the nature of his salvation, and give authority to proclaim it.

2. The HOLY SPIRIT must be sent from the Father to awaken the consciences of men; convince them of sin, righteousness, and judgment; apply the promise of pardon to the consciences of penitent sinners; and when they have freely accepted Christ crucified for their Saviour, then to testify with their spirits that God, for Christ's sake, has blotted out all that is past; and thus, being justified freely through the redemption that is in Christ, having an entrance into the holiest by his blood, and by that Spirit being purified from all unrighteousness, the carnal mind totally destroyed, and the whole image of God restamped upon the soul, they may be fully qualified for, and at last received into, an eternal state of glory and happiness.

Justification comes through what Christ has done FOR man.

Sanctification comes through what Christ's Spirit does IN man.

Those whose faith rests only in the first do not receive the second.

Those who do not receive the second cannot see God.

The bare belief of justification, through the passion and death of Christ, pardons no man's sins.

The bare belief of sanctification through his blood, makes no man holy. Pardon must be received into the conscience. Holiness must be received into the heart. This is evident from what the apostle says in the text; which is stated under the following head.

V The end to which they are called to be made “par-



takers of the divine nature ;” and to “ escape the corruption that is in the world.”

The object of all God’s promises and dispensations was to bring fallen man back to that state of blessedness in which he was created, and to the image of God which he had lost. This is the sum and substance of the whole gospel and religion of Christ. We have partaken of an earthly, sensual, devilish nature ; the design of God is to remove this, and make us “ partakers of the divine nature ;” and save us from the corruption, in principle and fact, “ which is in the world ;” and this is termed “ being made partakers of the divine nature,” *ἵνα γεννησθε θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως*, that ye may be partakers of a divine nature—not *the* divine nature, as if the *nature of God* were meant ; but *a* divine nature, a holy frame of soul, a holy heart, full of pure and righteous tempers, affections, and desires. The former nature was evil and earthly—this nature is heavenly and divine ; one leads to earth and animal enjoyments, the other leads to heaven and pure spiritual blessedness. Of such a nature they are to be, *κοινωνοὶ*, such participators as to have fellowship with those who are of such a nature. They are to be made fit companions for the saints in light. An unholy man cannot enter into heaven ; and were he in it, it would be no enjoyment to him, because it is not suited to him. The nature of the resident must be suited to the place of residence. The fishes live not on the elms, and the cattle browse not in the depths of the sea. Hell is for demons and wicked men ; heaven, for holy angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect. There is a fellowship among devils, and those who are partakers of a diabolic nature ; for aught we know,

“ Devil with devil damned firm concord holds ;”

and we know that the inhabitants of heaven are brethren

with holy souls. See the address of the apocalyptic angel to St. John, who fell down at his feet in order to worship him. "See," says he, "thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this Book: worship God;" Rev. xxii. 9.

Let none of the corrupt, those who through lust are under the influence of the spirit of the world, expect to enter into the kingdom of God. No man's creed, howsoever orthodox, will save him. Devils believe and tremble; and who have more orthodox creeds than they? No passport to heaven, but Christ in the heart, the hope of glory. For in Christ Jesus, circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but a new creation—the faith which worketh by love, and purifieth the heart. We must have a divine nature to go to a divine place. We are called by his glory and virtue—by his glorious power in us, as the means, to his own glory as the end. He works virtue, holiness, and purity in us by the energy of his Spirit; and calls us to a future state of blessedness, by glory and virtue as exciting agents. Now this state of salvation is to be expected by those "who escape the corruption that is in the world." The word is very emphatic, *αποφυγοντες της εν κοσμω φθορας*—not only having escaped, but who "are escaping the corruption that is in the world through evil concupiscence," or irregular desire of any kind, and every kind. God purifies no heart in which sin is indulged. We must escape, and continue to escape; there is a "corruption in the world"—our "adversary, the devil, goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." In every step of our way of probation, there is either an occurring or pursuing corruption, some form of temptation which has not been before seen, or some of those which, once having been inmates, have been cast out, and are ever

seeking and watching for an opportunity to re-enter. "Hence, we must run, and run on ; flee, and continue fleeing ; forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those that are before, we must press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus ;" Phil. iii. 13, 14.

Let the serious reader, who ardently wishes to get his soul saved, take in a condensed view the sum of what has been already said, viz. :—

1. Thou also art a subject of that mighty working of the corruption that is in the world through lust, or the principle of irregular and unholy desire.

2. Pray to God deeply to convince thee of thy fallen state, and to give thee true repentance.

3. Pray to God earnestly, that thou mayest never rest till thou hast a clear sense of thy acceptance with God, through the Son of his love.

4. As he convinced thee that thou hadst a guilty conscience, and didst need pardon, pray to him that he may convince thee that thou hast a fallen nature—also an evil heart—a spirit that lusteth to envy—and that it must be regenerated and purified from all unrighteousness.

5. Seek this blessing with thy whole soul—in all things—in all means—in all times : never lose sight of thy necessity, and of God's ability to save.

6. Read the exceeding great and invaluable promises relative to this point ; they are numerous, both in the Old and New Testaments.

7. Fear not to take the fullest view of inbred sin—beg of God to lead thee by his Spirit into every chamber of the house of imagery.

8. Having seen thy own heart, abhor thyself. Thou hast already received redemption in his blood, the forgiveness of sins ; but feel, deeply feel, that thou must have the "very thoughts of thy heart cleansed by the

inspiration of his Holy Spirit." Without this, thou canst not safely rest.

9. While seeking this salvation, let no sin, however refined in appearance, have any dominion over thee; beware of indulging any easily-besetting sin; abstain from every appearance of evil.

10. Strongly exercise the faith thou hast already. It is as much thy duty to strive to *believe*, as it is to strive to *pray*. Use grace, and have grace.

11. Do not give way to discouragement. He who hath promised to come will surely come.

12. See that thou bring forth the fruits of that faith and love which thou already hast; and in the spirit of loving obedience, according to thy present means of grace, expect that fulness of God which he has promised. Nothing can withstand the conquering blood of Jesus; nothing, the sovereign energy of his Almighty Spirit. He will shortly say, "Be clean;" and thou shalt be clean.

That God is able thus to cleanse the heart and affections, and purify the soul, can admit of no doubt.

That he wills the happiness of all his intelligent offspring is as evident, when the infinite excellence and benevolence of his nature is considered.

And that he is thus able and thus willing at all times, cannot be reasonably disputed; and for proof of these things, look at his exceeding great and precious promises.

May not every believer in Christ Jesus come even now to the throne of grace, and ask mercy and find grace for this and every other time of need? Yes: and what he purifies, he can and will keep pure. Reader, have faith in God. He is more willing to give than thou art to receive, and is wont to give more than thou canst

desire. •He will therefore save thee to the uttermost. And after having guided thee by his counsel through life, he will receive thee into his everlasting glory. Then to him who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever    Amen.

## SERMON XXXI.

### DIVINE REVELATION.

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ROMANS XV. 4.

“Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning ; that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.”

IN that short but comprehensive and excellent prayer, attributed to St. Chrysostom; with which our public prayers generally terminate, we beseech the “Almighty God to grant us in this world the knowledge of his truth, and in the world to come life everlasting;” and in thus praying we express our conviction that there is a state of everlasting blessedness beyond the duration of all earthly things ; that it is the gift of God ; that his truth alone not only declares this, but teaches the way in which it may be attained ; and that the knowledge of this truth must be received from God himself.

As the truth in question must be that which concerns the true happiness of man, the immortality of the soul, the worship which we owe to our Creator, and that which qualifies the soul for a state of eternal blessedness, it is a thing which man cannot acquire by himself, nor teach to his neighbour : it must be taught by God ; and this must be a revelation of his will to mankind. Now, this revelation must be given either by continual inspiration

on the mind of every individual, teaching, in all cases of necessity, what each should know, believe, and perform, in order to escape evil, and do that which is lawful and right in the sight of him by whom actions are weighed, and who will finally reward every man according to his works.

Or, if this mode of continual inspiration on the mind of every man, varied throughout life, according to his changing circumstances, be considered as rather a clumsy mode of conveying divine instruction, then there is another, and *but that one*, and that is by *one full revelation* of his will, given in such a time, and to such persons, as he may think proper to choose ; and by causing this revelation to be written and recorded, and copies of it endlessly multiplied, each individual, by having recourse to it, may learn to know God's will, and everything that concerns his present safety and eternal blessedness. Now this is in fact what God has done. He has given us what is called, by way not only of distinction, but eminence, the *SCRIPTURE*, and this he communicated in ancient times to holy men, by the inspiration of his own Spirit, who carefully wrote it down and delivered it to those to whom it was at first more immediately sent, and they have handed it down from generation to generation, without addition, defalcation, or wilful corruption of any kind ; and to this the apostle in the text alludes, when he says, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning ;" and which another apostle characterizes thus : "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good work," 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. And the same apostle says, "The prophecy (the different portions of God's revealed will) came not in old time by the will

of man ; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," 2 Pet. i. 21. And this inspiration is essentially necessary to constitute what is called divine revelation, the Holy Scripture, the Bible, or the Old and New Testaments.

But though the divine inspiration of this sacred volume be granted, there are some very important questions which may be reasonably asked relative to the manner in which this revelation was made ; the times, the persons, the language, the mode of preservation ; the moral certainty that it has been handed down entire, and that the various translations and versions faithfully represent, as to the full scope and meaning, the sacred originals from which they profess to be taken.

Though a consideration of all these circumstances in detail would require a larger treatise, which cannot comport with the ordinary length of a sermon, yet some general statements may be made that will give satisfaction to reasonable inquiry.

In order to this, I shall consider,—

I. The *absolute necessity* of a divine revelation.

II. The *various ways* in which a revelation of the divine will has been given to men.

III. The *languages* in which these divine communications were made and recorded.

IV The *ancient Versions* or translations by which this divine revelation has been diffused and authenticated.

V Examine the question, Is this revelation, as we have it now, *entire* ? have no parts been lost—no spurious writings added ?

VI. The benefit to be derived from a proper knowledge and study of the Scripture.

VII. Make a short application of the whole.



I. The *absolute necessity* of a divine revelation.

That the revelation in question should have been made, or in other words, that it is absolutely necessary, is a point that should be first sufficiently established.

If God be the sole fountain of light and truth, all knowledge must be derived from him. "The spirit of a man may know the things of a man ; but the Spirit of God can alone know and teach the things of God." That is, the human intellect, in its ordinary power and operation, is sufficient to comprehend the various earthly things that concern man's sustenance and welfare in social life ; but this intellect cannot fathom the things of God ; it cannot find out the mind of the Most High ; it knows not his will ; it has no just idea of the end for which man was made—of that in which his best interests lie—of its own nature—of the nature of moral good and evil—how to avoid the latter, and how to attain the former, in which true happiness, or the supreme good, consists ; and these things it is the province of a divine revelation to teach ; for without this, they have never been taught or conceived by man.

All these may appear to be gratuitous assertions, and to require positive proof. I grant it ; and they should not have been hazarded were not the proofs at hand. And I acknowledge farther, that these proofs should not be sought for in the Bible merely, but in history and fact ; that the history should be that of all the nations of the world, and the facts as numerous as the nations and their subdivisions.

One assertion, which I do not produce as proof, though I know it is such, shall bring forward generally the proofs I have in view ; it is the saying of an eminent man, partaking of no ordinary portion of the inspiration here contended for ; it is this, "The world by wisdom knew not God." This short saying contains all the

assertions made above ; and history and facts must now be produced to confirm them.

Most nations of the earth, who have pretended to any degree of civilization, have been careful to preserve their own records, even from the remotest periods ; and in the course of the Divine Providence, these have come down to the present times ; and by these we can judge both of the civil and moral state of those nations. And we are not in danger of forming unfavourable conclusions, if we abide by the letter of their own histories, as they have been evidently drawn up with much partiality, pressing everything into their service that appeared calculated to promote their pretensions to antiquity, eminence, and national honour. Others who have written of such nations have greatly lowered the standard of their assumed excellence ; from which we may safely conclude that the medium between both relations approximates pretty nearly to the truth.

From all the accounts we have of the most eminent, ancient, and celebrated nations, such as the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans, we find them, from their own relations, to have been destitute of the knowledge of the true God ; and although cultivating various arts and sciences, yet fierce, barbarous, and cruel. Their history is a tissue of frauds, aggressions, broken truces, assassinations, revolts, insurrections, general disorder, and insecurity. Their laws, despotic and oppressive ; their kings and governors, tyrants ; their statesmen, time-servers and oppressors of the common people ; their soldiers, licensed plunderers ; their heroes, human butchers ; their conquests, the blast of desolation and death on empires and nations ; their religions, superstitious, gross, brutal, and unclean ; and their gods, and the general object of their worship, worse in their character and acknowledged practices, than the

most villanous and execrable of men. And what must be the imitations in their votaries, when they had such originals to copy? This was their general state and character.

But were not the highly-cultivated Greeks, and the learned and polite Romans, illustrious exceptions? I except none of them from this general censure. Read their own histories, those of the republics of Greece, and what do you find? Treasons, insurrections, crimes, and carnage of all descriptions. Consult, also, the Roman writers on their republican, consular, tribunal, regal, and imperial states; and see the portraits which those master-painters have sketched; and what do you behold? no caricatures, but likenesses from *life*—features, naturally fell and distorted, scowling through the deep and murky shades which serve to relieve and make them prominent.

A Roman citizen, well acquainted with their history and character, living in the very times of their highest cultivation both in language and arts, thus describes them:—"They were vain in their imaginations; their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise, they became fools; they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to quadrupeds and reptiles. They had vile affections, and were given up to a reprobate mind; were filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful." See Saul of Tarsus, in his Epistle to the Romans, chap. i. 21—32.

All these charges are found, sustained, and proved by their own historians and poets; see Tacitus, Livy, Sue-

tonius, Juvenal, and Horace. And that, with all their boasted knowledge, they knew not God, is abundantly clear from their superabundant idolatry; their gods many, and their lords many. Even at this time there were multitudes of Jews among them, who were well known to be worshippers of one simple, pure, and infinite Being, called God, or Jehovah; from whom they might have got some consistent ideas concerning the Supreme Being; yet so grossly darkened were their minds, even when boasting the highest attainments in useful and ornamental sciences and arts, that they had no perception of the truth. One of their greatest men in knowledge and philosophy, and in eloquence unrivalled, M. T. Cicero, who searched into the subject, and wrote a treatise expressly upon it, *De Naturâ Deorum*, which remains to the present day, could not, with all his vast abilities and learning, make out any rational account of the Divine Nature; thought there might be something of this kind, which he terms *illud inexprimabile*—that ineffable thing; but, after all, concludes with doubting whether there be gods or not! So true is the assertion made above, “The world by wisdom knew not God;” and God permitted it to try its highest powers, cultivated to the utmost pitch, in minds of the first order, and in circumstances and times the most advantageous and promising, in order to teach all men this most important lesson, that God can be seen only in his own light; and that no man can know anything relative to his peace and salvation, unless it be given him from above: in a word, except by such a revelation of his own will, as in his great compassion and mercy he has given us in his Bible.

As a corroborating fact, we find that the nations who have received this sacred book, and availed themselves of its light and advantages, are among the wisest, great-

est, and most powerful nations of the earth ; and that these very nations have riches, dominion, and excellence, just in the proportion in which they have received these *words of wisdom*, and have had their hearts and lives regulated by them ; while all others are lying in the mire of sin and bonds of iniquity, degraded below the human character, without one redeeming trait in their minds, or power in their souls, to rescue them from the disgrace, pain, and misery of their state. Thus we find, that it was essentially necessary that we should have an inspired revelation, and that something should have been “written aforetime for our learning.”

Nor has the lapse of time mended the moral condition and character of the heathen nations. Our extensive commercial connexions, not only with the nations of Europe and America, but also with the principal heathen kingdoms and states in most parts of the world, have brought us to an intimate acquaintance with the dark places of the earth, which are filled with the habitations of cruelty : and what have we seen ? Darkness covering every land, and gross darkness the hearts of the people. Idolatry the most disgusting, and superstition the most foolish and degrading, closely associated with ridiculous ceremonies and cruel rites. Religious suicide ; abandonment of the aged to starvation when past labour, or left in the woods to be devoured by wild beasts when in hopeless disease ; exposure of infants ; burning of widows with the bodies of their deceased husbands, their own children lighting the funeral pyre ! the most painful, unmeaning, and lengthened-out pilgrimages ; religious fasts, by which health and strength are exhausted ; and feasts, where the man sinks into the beast :—all these, and more of a similar kind, equally degrading and destructive, prevail among the millions of Asia, and especially among what are called the civilized, mild, and

pacific inhabitants of Hindostan! These are the nations that know not God, and have not received that revelation by which alone he can be made known, and by which man can be made wise unto salvation. Time, therefore, brings about no moral changes in the individuals, nor conversions among nations. It is the revelation of God, the gospel of his Son Jesus Christ, that is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth, whether Jew or Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free. What were our own forefathers before the gospel was planted here? A nation of savages. And what has Christianity done for their descendants? It has made them the greatest, most enlightened, most powerful, and most eminent of the nations of the globe. Compare even our present state as a Christian people with our former state as heathens, and then exclaim, What hath God wrought!

The human heart, left to its own workings, either sinks in the mire, or falls over precipices. What aid has man ever found from what is called natural religion? In comparison with revelation, it is a rushlight against the sun, howsoever modelled by the inventions of man. It neither enlightens, warms, nor invigorates; the breath of God is not in it; for what is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord.

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II. The *manner* in which the revelation of the divine will was made to men is worthy of particular inquiry, as it is both curious and important. There is sufficient evidence from the Scriptures themselves that this was given in the five following ways:—

1. By the *personal appearance* of him who is termed the “Angel of the Covenant,” and “the Angel in whom is the name of Jehovah;” who was afterwards revealed as the Saviour of mankind. He is called מלאך יהוה *Maleach*

*Yehovah*, the "Angel (or Messenger) of Jehovah," Gen. xvi. 7; and המלאך הגואל *hammaleach hagoel*, "the redeeming Angel," or "the Angel the Redeemer," Gen. xlviii. 16; and מלאך פניו *maleach panav*, "the Angel of his (God's) presence," Isai. lxiii. 9; and מלאך הברית *maleach haberith*, "the Angel of the Covenant," Mal. iii. 1. This Person frequently appeared to the patriarchs, foretelling what God alone could know, and promising to perform what God alone could do. It was this Angel that appeared to Abram, Gen. xv. 1, &c., and gave the glorious promises of the redemption of the world by one (Christ) who should proceed from Abraham's stock; and it was the same that appeared to Hagar, and delivered that remarkable prophecy relative to the descendants of Ishmael, which has been so circumstantially fulfilled in the whole history of his posterity; being one of those prophecies which is very legitimately produced to show the divine inspiration of the Mosaic records. To enter into an examination of the passages quoted above would lead into details inconsistent with the length of a public discourse.

2. A *second* mode by which God communicated the knowledge of his will was an *audible voice*, sometimes accompanied by *emblematical appearances*. In this way God revealed himself to Adam in Paradise, Gen. i. 28: "And God said unto them (Adam and Eve), Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth." Gen. ii. 16: "And the Lord commanded the man, saying, Of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat." Gen. iii. 8: "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden." Gen. iii. 15: "And I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." And it was by such a voice that Moses received almost every communication that is mentioned in the Pentateuch. And by this same

mode was Samuel called to be a prophet, a priest, and one of the greatest judges of Israel. See 1 Sam. iii. 4—10. But these audible voices were often accompanied by striking emblematical appearances. Thus Jeremiah was instructed to show the Israelitish rulers and people their speedy and irretrievable ruin by the emblem of broken bottles, Jer. xix. 1—12. Ezekiel showed the same calamity by the emblem of burnt hair, chap. v. 1. The ephah, Zech. v. 5; good and bad figs, Jer. xxiv. 1, &c.; the marred belt, Jer. xiii. 1—7; plumb-line, Amos vii. 7; and several other matters, were emblems which God used to illustrate the predictions which he delivered to his prophets in general.

3. A *third* mode was by the *ministry of angels*, often working miracles. Thus an angel appeared to Jacob, changed his name, predicted his future greatness, and by a supernatural influence upon his body, gave him a sign for the fulfilment of the prediction, Gen. xxxii. 24, &c. An angel appeared also to Moses in a burning-bush, and gave him those glorious promises relative to the deliverance of the Israelites from bondage, and their settlement in the promised land; see Exod. iii. and iv. Gideon (Judg. vi.), Manoah (Judg. xiii.), and others, received pointed revelations from God by angelic ministry. And Joshua, by the ministry of the angel called the Captain of the Lord's Host, got the assurance of his success in the conquest of the heathen nations of Canaan, Josh. v. 13. And God confirmed their testimony; for it is written that the word thus spoken by angels was stedfast, Heb. ii. 2. But the chief of those angelic appearances were of Him who was afterwards God manifested in the flesh; see above.

4. By *dreams* and *visions* of the night, or in *trances* by day. In one of the former, Solomon received that inspiration and extraordinary wisdom from God, that



qualified him not only to be the most eminent king, but also enabled him to write those books which still bear his name in the inspired volume ; see 1 Kings iii. 5—15. And that wonderful prophecy relative to the five great empires was delivered in a dream to Nebuchadnezzar, and interpreted by Daniel ; see Dan. ii. 31—45. And the prophecy relative to the destruction of the Chaldean empire, Dan. iv. 10—18. See also Pharaoh's dream, relative to the dearth in Egypt, interpreted by Joseph ; see Gen. xl. 5, &c. In a vision God revealed to Abram the promise of the Messiah, Gen. xv. 1, &c. ; and in a trance the affliction and deliverance of his posterity, Gen. xv. 12—18.

5. But the most common way was by *direct inspiration* ; by the powerful agency of God on the mind, giving it a strong conception and supernatural persuasion of the truth of the things which he revealed to the understanding. The persons chosen to receive these inspirations were termed *prophets*, נביאים *nebiim*, from נבא *naba*, to intercede, make prayer, and, in consequence, receive inspiration from God to declare his will ; and sometimes they were called *seers*, חזים *chozim*, from חזה *chazah*, to see, i. e., supernatural things, spiritual sights ; to see mentally, by the help and inspiration of the Holy Ghost. The prophet and the seer were the same in most cases, but with this difference : the prophet had the impression made on his mind, transfusing spiritual ideas, whether in respect of the present or future. The seer had the divine communications by images and representations. The one perceived intellectually ; the other, by means of the imagination. The prophet knew by extraordinary impressions on his understanding ; the seer had symbolical representations. The seer was always a prophet, but the prophet was not always a seer. The first appears to have had frequent symbolical representations, as well

as strong preternatural mental impressions; the second appears to have had the latter always without the former, except on particular occasions.

The inspiration of these men is sometimes represented by the Lord coming down in a cloud, and taking his own Spirit and putting it on the appointed persons, and causing it to rest upon them. See the account of the inspiration of the seventy elders, Numb. xi. 25. In general, it is represented by the word of the Lord coming to the prophet or inspired man; and who was enabled clearly to discern what God was about to do, or what he purposed to do at some future time. This is generally mentioned in the commissions which the prophets received, to go and make proclamation to the people of that which God would have them to know. "For he revealed his secrets to his servants the prophets," Amos iii. 7; and at such times they felt themselves "full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might," Micah iii. 8. And those who received the prophetic gift are represented as "being filled with the Holy Ghost," Luke i. 67. Then "all the words which God spake unto them they received in their hearts, and proclaimed to the people," Ezek. iii. 10, 11. And this inspiration was often so powerful, that they could not repress it; "the word in their heart was as a burning fire, shut up in their bones, and they could not forbear." See the case of Jeremiah, chap. xxvi. 12.

No man could acquire the gift of prophecy by any industry, or any human means; for "the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," 2 Pet. i. 21. They delivered the mind of God to the people: their own wills, and their opinions and inventions, they were not permitted to mingle with the testimony of their God; and hence, that testimony, being truth without

any mixture of error, is properly termed that "Scripture which is given by inspiration of God ;" and consequently, "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness ; that the man of God may be perfect, and thoroughly furnished unto all good works." And as all "these Holy Scriptures were written for our learning ;" and "Jesus Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth"—the sum and substance of the code of divine revelation ; therefore these "holy Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith in him," 2 Tim. iii. 15—17.

The process of inspiration went gradually on for upwards of 4000 years ; when He, "who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, at last spoke unto us by his Son ;" who, enduing his disciples with various gifts of the Holy Ghost, completed the canon of divine revelation, by adding the new covenant to the old, and thus furnishing everything necessary to perfect the instruction, and save the soul of man.

This revelation God gave in several parcels or parts, at different times, in different places, and to different persons ; just as men could profit by it, and the circumstances of his government of the world required it ; one portion making way for another, by preparing the mind for its reception. We give the elements of a science before we attempt to teach the science itself ; we teach our children the alphabet, and to compound the letters into syllables and words, before we require them to read. In his first revelations to man, God gave the grand principles or outlines of all essential truth. In these words, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent," God intimated the whole scheme of human redemption by the Son of his love ; and in the rites and

ceremonies of the Mosaic law, he showed the nature and necessity of that redemption, and how it was to be effected. Thus making original or primitive things the representatives of those that should succeed; giving line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little, as men were able to bear and profit by it. Hence primitive communications are short, and comparatively obscure; those that succeed clearer; the prophetic light shining more and more to the perfect day.

III. The languages in which these divine communications were made, recorded, and preserved, is the third point to be considered. That the people who were to profit by them, and to keep and exactly obey them, should have them in their own language, is at once evident and reasonable. The law and the prophets belonged to the Jews; the language of the Jews was Hebrew; therefore the law and the prophets were written in the Hebrew tongue. And so necessary did God ever consider it that the Holy Scriptures should be written in the vulgar language, that when the Jews were suffering a seventy years' captivity in Babylon, during which the knowledge of their native tongue was nearly lost, he caused the chief transactions of the time to be recorded in the Chaldean language, as we find in the Books of Ezra and the prophet Daniel. In Ezra, from ver. 8 of chap. iv. is Chaldee, to chap. vi. ver. 19, and from ver. 12 of chap. vii., to ver. 27. In Daniel, the Chaldee begins chap. ii., ver. 4, and continues to the end of chap. vii.; and for the benefit of those who either came young into Babylon, or were born there, as well as for those to whom the Chaldean tongue was now vernacular, a translation of the law and the prophets was made by two learned, and as the Jews think inspired, men, Onkelos and Jonathan ben Uzziel, into the Chaldee; these trans-

lations, generally called Targums, remain to the present day. Thus the providence of God took care that the people should read the Holy Scriptures, and that they should have them in the languages that were understood both by young and old. God gave this right to all to whom he sent these Scriptures ; and it is only a fallen heretical and apostate church which has dared to dispute this order of God, and take away this key of knowledge from the common people.

But it may be asked, as this divine revelation was given at various times through a long lapse of time, "here a little, and there a little," how have these several parcels been preserved and collected in that book called, by way of eminence, the Bible ? In answer, it is proper to observe, that during the 2000 years of the patriarchal dispensation nothing was committed to writing ; all was held and communicated by tradition ; and through the longevity of the inhabitants of the earth during that period, and the strict family connexion that subsisted between the heads of families and their descendants, such traditions were easily preserved, as they had but few hands to pass through, and were easily retained in memory. But however respectable the testimony of tradition in such circumstances, yet we are not obliged to receive this testimony as authentic and true, but as the facts have been collected and detailed by men divinely inspired ; for those ancient and important facts, first preserved by tradition, have been collected by Moses, and are embodied in his Pentateuch, under the broad seal of that Holy Spirit, by whom this eminent lawgiver and historian was inspired.

I repeat it : in the antediluvian world, when the life of man was so protracted, there was comparatively little need for writing of any kind, as past transactions had to pass through but few hands. Tradition, therefore, an-

swered every purpose to which writing in any kind of characters could be subservient. There could be little danger of any important fact becoming obsolete, as its history had to pass through very few hands, and all these friends and relatives, in the most proper sense of the terms; as they lived in an insulated state, under a patriarch's government. Thus it was easy for Moses to be satisfied of the truth of all he relates in the Book of Genesis, as the accounts came to him through the hands of few persons. For from Adam to Noah there was but one man necessary to the correct transmission of the history of this period of 1656 years. This history was, without doubt, perfectly known to Methuselah, who lived to see them both. In like manner Shem connected Noah and Abram, having lived to converse with both; as Isaac did with Abram and Joseph, from whom all these things might have been easily conveyed to Moses by Amram, who was contemporary with Joseph. Supposing, then, that all the curious facts recorded in the book of Genesis had no other authority than the tradition already referred to, they would still stand upon a foundation of credibility superior to any that the most reputable of the Greek and Latin historians can boast. After the dispersion of mankind in the time of Peleg, writing became necessary, not only because of this dispersion, but because the life of man was so much abridged, and consequently tradition must become less certain as the facts had to pass through a multitude of hands; hence alphabetical characters became absolutely necessary, as, without these, the records of the world must soon be obliterated from the swiftly succeeding generations of mankind.

Perhaps the first regular alphabetic writing was that

the Decalogue or ten commandments. That this writing was actually by the finger of God, and not by his command, the following Scriptures amply prove : "The Lord said unto Moses, Come up to me in the mountain, and I will give thee the tables of stone, which I have written," Exod. xxiv. 12. "And he gave unto Moses tables of stone, written with the finger of God," Exod. xxxi. 18. "And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God graven upon the tables," Exod. xxxii. 15, 16. "These words (viz. the ten commandments) the Lord spake in the mount, out of the midst of the fire of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice ; and he added no more, but he wrote them on two tables of stone," Deut. v. 22. Thus it appears God invented the characters, and wrote the first copy, and thereby testified his will, that the revelation he had made, and that which he should further make, should be committed to writing, not only for its preservation, but for the general benefit of mankind. Tradition and writing were the grand means by which these records were preserved and brought down to the latest posterity ; and it is the unanimous opinion of Jews and Christians, through all their generations, that EZRA the scribe (who was one of the captivity), about the year of the world 3547, before the Christian era, 457, under the guidance of the Divine Spirit, collected all the portions given by divine inspiration then extant, and arranged them in the manner in which they are found at the present time ; and in this order they have, with very little variation, existed from the captivity to the origin of printing, or a little after, when in A. D 1488, the first complete copy of the Hebrew Scriptures issued from the press at Soncini in Italy ; since which time they have gone through innumerable impressions, both by Jews and Christians.

Previously to the invention of printing, the Hebrew Bible was carefully preserved among the Jews in MS., either on strong vellum, or a semi-tanned goat skin, commonly called basil leather, both materials almost imperishable, if kept from fire and damp; the very oldest MSS., those that amount to nearly a thousand years (some of which are now in my library), being written in a large bold character, with excellent ink, are as legible now as they were at the beginning. Every synagogue in the world had always a copy of the law and of the prophets, which was preserved with the greatest care and veneration; and most Jewish families of respectability had at least the ספר תורה *Sepher Torah*, or “book of the law,” and the הפטרה *Haphtorah*, or Sabbath Readings from the prophets, which were handed down from father to son, or carefully replaced from the most authentic copies, if accidentally lost, damaged, or burnt. And to preserve the sacred volume from corruption and defalcation, there was, from time almost immemorial, a class of Jewish critics, termed Masoretes, who not only had taken care to distinguish and number the different larger and smaller sections of the law, but also the very letters, so as to register the number in each part; and how often each alphabetical character occurred in each book: a work truly Herculean, but accomplished with amazing correctness by those ancient and most respectable literary drudges. This work, called the *Masora*, remains also to the present day; and of it several MS. copies exist in my own library. We may affect to smile at the conscientious punctiliousness of these critics, but their work and its preservation are proofs of their deep persuasion that their Scriptures came from God; and that he who gave them had taken care that they should be most scrupulously and sacredly preserved.

Let me add a few further considerations. 1. The He-



brew character, which is necessarily large and bold, was very proper for preservation. 2. The materials on which the text was written, were the least likely to perish or be decomposed. 3. The religious, not to say superstitious care, taken by the Jews of their MSS., prevented them in general from being damaged or lost. 4. The Jews themselves being preserved a distinct people, and by their ordinances and rites separated from all others, generally despised and often persecuted, were the more careful to perform their rites, and keep with sedulous care the records that enjoined them. 5. Their being read every sabbath, as well as on numerous festivals and fasts, in all their synagogues in every place of their dispersion, prevented them from the danger of being lost, or ever becoming scarce : and indeed this is evident from the very form and style of writing in different parts of the world ; for although there is an essential form that belongs to every letter, as there is in the alphabetical characters of all languages, yet the Jews in different nations had a peculiar mode of constructing that essential form, so that those who are conversant with Hebrew MSS. can almost at the first view tell whether a MS. be written by a German, Spanish, or Italian Jew ; the former being in general large, rough, and inclined to the left ; the others being erect, full, and elegant. The synagogues, ever jealous over each other, lest any alterations, additions, or subtractions should be made, in any jot or tittle, or even in the vowel points, though of themselves not essential to the integrity of the language, have made positive rules to guard against these evils.

6. There is another consideration that should not be overlooked. The general character of the Jews is a strong argument for the divine authority and safe custody of the Scriptures ; they were proverbially incredulous and refractory ; and it was probably on this very ground that

God chose them to be the keepers of his testimonies ; for, had they not had the most incontrovertible proofs that God had spoken by Moses and the prophets, they would neither have credited nor preserved his oracles. Their incredulity is therefore no mean proof of the divine authority of the Law and the Prophets.

7. The evangelists and apostles of our Lord were all Jews, and partook deeply of the same spirit of incredulity, as several places in the Gospels prove ; and had they not had the fullest evidence of the divinity of their Master, they would not have believed, much less have sealed the truth with their blood. Thus their incredulity is a strong proof of the authenticity of the Gospel.

IV The ancient Versions made of the Hebrew Scriptures into different languages, rendered the destruction or material alteration of those Scriptures morally impossible.

The principal versions of the Hebrew text are, 1. The Law, or five books of Moses, in the very ancient Cufic Samaritan, made for that motley mixture of different nations which were sent into the kingdom of Israel by the kings of Assyria, after they had subdued that nation, and carried into captivity the principal inhabitants of the land. This version still exists, and is in the main a very fair representation of the sacred original. This has been printed with the Hebrew and Hebræo-Samaritan text, in the first volume of the London Polyglot. And as it has been preserved from the remotest antiquity, before the invention of printing, it is not likely to perish now that it has been committed to the perpetuity of the typographic art.

2. The CHALDEE Targums, or paraphrases of the Law and the Prophets, in the Chaldee language. That of Onkelos on the Law, and Jonathan on the Prophets,

have also been carefully preserved, as the former especially has been considered by the Jews of all times as a work formed under an especial Divine direction. These also have been multiplied, both by Jews and Christians, by means of the press.

3. The SYRIAC Version, which is very ancient, and faithful to the strict tenor and integrity of the Hebrew text, is still extant, and also multiplied by means of the press, and is still in use in all the Syrian churches.

4. The ARABIC Version of the Pentateuch, made by a very learned Jew, Rabbi Saadiah Gaon, who flourished in the ninth century of the Christian era, is a most faithful work. Of this version, a very ancient copy, nearly of the time of the author, is in my own library, and is one of the most faithful versions I have ever seen in any language. It has been the basis of most of those in that tongue which have been since published.

5. The Greek Version of the SEPTUAGINT has been both to Jews and Christians of the utmost importance, as a faithful testimony of the antiquity of the Jewish Scriptures, and their uncorrupted transmission to posterity.

This version was made by Jews, learned both in Hebrew and Greek, at the command of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, about 280 years before the Christian era ; and for several hundreds of years was the sole text-book of the Hellenistic Jews, or Jews dwelling in all Greek nations, from the time of its formation to some centuries after our Lord's incarnation ; and its general fidelity is shown by its being that very version from which our blessed Lord and his apostles drew their quotations of the Law and the Prophets, which are still found in the evangelists, and in the apostolic epistles.

The existence of the Old Testament in Greek, and its universal acceptance among the Jews, had probably no

small influence in causing the New Testament to be written in Greek also, that the Jews, who were exceedingly numerous in Egypt, Arabia, Syria, different parts of Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy, who all used the Greek Version of the Septuagint, might have the New Covenant in the same language, and thus be able to compare both Testaments, and see how the prophecies of the Old were fulfilled in the New ; and that the Jews, both in Palestine and in all the countries of their dispersion, might, as God had ordained, have the first offer of the Gospel made to them ; for the apostles, who were commanded to preach the Gospel to all the world, were strictly ordered to “begin first at Jerusalem.” And as the Greek language, by the conquest of Alexander the Great, and the subsequent conquests of the Romans, had absorbed the dialects of the conquered provinces, the Greek became not only the language of the learned everywhere, but also that of the people at large. There was no other tongue then in the universe so well calculated at once to preserve and convey the records of salvation ; hence, the Greek language was the original of the New Covenant, as the Hebrew had been that of the Old. But after that Jerusalem had been taken and destroyed by the Romans, and the Jews captivated and scattered over the face of the earth, as far as the Roman arms had reached, the Greek Version of the Septuagint became the common text-book to the Jews, as above noticed ; and the New Testament in Greek was its constant companion among all the converts to Christianity, whether originally Jews or Gentiles. And thus, by the especial providence of God, that which was “written of old” was so constructed as to become the means of spiritual and saving learning to the principal nations of the earth.

It is well known, that by an irruption of the northern

nations (who are generally termed Goths and Vandals, the inhabitants of Scandinavia, the countries now called Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and the islands and territories dependant on them), the Roman Empire was dismembered, they seizing on the western parts ; and by this means the empire was alternately formed into two grand divisions, called the Eastern and Western Empires ; in the latter, the Roman or Latin language prevailed ; in the former, the Greek. In these two vast divisions, Christianity made a rapid progress. In the beginning of the fourth century, the conversion of Constantine the Great became the means of converting the major part of the great Roman Empire to the profession of the Christian faith ; the church of Christ was then universal in all parts of what was called the Roman empire ; but from the ninth to the eleventh century a gradual separation took place between the eastern and western parts of the church in this empire, which at last settled in a complete dismemberment of the church, which continues to the present day ; one part bearing the name of the Eastern or Greek Church ; the other, that of the Western or Latin Church : the ecclesiastical government of the former being vested in patriarchs ; that of the latter, in popes. The language of the former was Greek, and all the services of that Church were celebrated in the Greek language ; and their Bible was, and still continues to be, the Greek Version of the Septuagint. The general language of the Western Church was Latin, and its services were performed in this language. To meet the necessities of the people, many attempts had been made to translate the Scriptures into the Latin tongue, but these being done by persons of no name or credit in the church, and but little skilled either in Hebrew or Greek, and the versions made being various and often contradictory, it pleased God to provide a

remedy. In the beginning of the fourth century, a very able and learned man, called Hieronymus, and now commonly St. Jerome, was raised up in this church. He saw and deplored the want of a proper Latin version of the whole Scriptures, for the use of the Western Church ; encouraged by the chief ecclesiastical authorities, he undertook this work ; and the better to qualify himself for the task, took a voyage into Palestine, and remained there seven years, that, conversing with the most learned of the Jewish rabbins, he might acquire a thorough knowledge of the Hebrew tongue ; he then translated the whole of the Old and New Testaments into Latin, which, being approved by the church, was universally adopted, and thence was called the *VULGATE*, from *vulgatus*, “published,” “common,” or “ordinary ;” and this is what is used by the Latin or Roman Catholic Church to the present day.

Thus we find that the two languages which are allowed to be the most elegant and energetic of all the languages of the universe, and those in which all the learning, theology, poetry, and philosophy of the ancient world have been handed down to us—the Greek and the Latin, and which are still, by general consent, the grand vehicles of sciences and arts, have been those employed by Divine Providence to bring down the Scriptures to the present times. These are the vouchers for the authenticity of the Hebrew text, from which they have been taken ; and the Hebrew of the Old, and the Greek of the New, being still preserved, are the touch-stones to which these and all other versions and translations must be brought, to ascertain their correctness, and prevent additions, defalcations, and corruptions of every kind ; and thus has God further provided, that that Revelation, so essentially necessary for the salvation of man, should be written for our learning in Hebrew and

Greek ; and that the most important languages of the universe—Greek and Latin, should be the means of bringing down from those original springs, the pure and salubrious waters, for the salvation of mankind. On this account the Greek Version of the Septuagint, and the Vulgate Latin, are of the utmost consequence to the Christian Church. Had it not been for those ancient Versions, there would have been found, especially in the original Hebrew, a multitude of words and phrases, the meaning of which, in these after-times, we should have been utterly unable to find out. And I can safely add, that the best Greek scholar in the universe must labour in vain, in a great variety of cases, to make out the phraseology of the New Testament, without the assistance of the Septuagint Version ; and we have already noticed what light this version throws on many words and forms in the Hebrew originals.

It is impossible to consider this subject without being struck with the kindness and admirable providence of God, not only in giving us those Scriptures, but also in the choice of the languages in which they were originally written ; the principal versions by which they have been handed down to posterity ; the very characters in which, and the materials on which, they have been written ; and the preservation of the whole, both in the originals and the ancient versions, by numerous MSS., which have been spread over the principal civilized nations of the world, and are at once the oldest and most important of all the MSS. which have survived the ravages of time. The Hebrew originals exist in numerous and very ancient MSS. in the hands of Jews and Gentiles in different parts of the earth. The Greek Version of the Septuagint, besides many MSS. of inferior note, is preserved in the Vatican at Rome, in what is called the Codex Vaticanus ; and in the library of the British Museum, in what

is called the Codex Alexandrinus: two of the oldest, most carefully written, and most correct MSS. known to exist. As to the Latin Vulgate, it has been multiplied by MSS innumerable; and copies of all these, since the invention of printing, have been further multiplied by an incalculable number of editions! Such care has God taken that "what was written of old for our learning" should be carefully preserved for the accomplishment of the end for which he has graciously designed it. Before I conclude on this head, it will not be amiss to mention the German Version of Luther, taken immediately from the originals; and the English translation taken from the same, and published in this country by royal authority in the year 1611; both of which are the purest streams ever deduced from the original wells of salvation.

In diffusing and preserving the knowledge of Divine Revelation, we have already seen that two venerable versions of the original Hebrew text, the Greek Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate, were principal means in the hands of providence and grace of God; the former especially became a very powerful instrument in preparing the way of the Gospel in the heathen world; as it was that version which the Jews read, and carried with them into all the countries where they were dispersed, and where there is full proof that many Gentiles examined and profited by it.

Hated and despised as the Jews were among the proud Romans, and the still more haughty and supercilious Greeks, their sojourning among them, and their Greek Version of the Scriptures, known by the name of the Septuagint, were the means of furnishing them with truer notions, and a more distinct knowledge of vice and virtue, of justice and equity, than they ever had before.



And on examination we shall find, that from the time of Alexander's conquest of Judea, a little more than 300 years before the Christian era, both Greeks and Romans became more rational and correct in their theological opinions ; and the sect of Eclectic philosophers, which had risen some time before, and whose object was to select from all the other sects, and from every attainable source, whatever was most consistent with reason and truth, were not a little indebted to the progress which the light of God, dispensed by means of the Septuagint, had made in the heathen world.

To this version, Christianity, under God, owes much. To it we are indebted for such a knowledge of the Hebrew originals of the Old Testament, as we never could have had without it, the pure Hebrew having ceased to be vernacular after the Babylonish captivity ; and Jesus Christ and his apostles have stamped an infinite value on this version by the general use they have made of it in the New Testament ; perhaps never once quoting directly the Hebrew Text, or using any other version than some copy of the Septuagint. Though prophecy had ceased from the time of Ezra, Daniel, and Malachi, yet by this version the Law and the Prophets were continued down to the time of Christ ; and this was the grand medium by which this conveyance was made. Nor is its usefulness deteriorated by the lapse of time ; it continues still a witness of the truth of Divine Revelation, and a sovereign help to the proper understanding of the Old Covenant ; and I hesitate not again to assert, that no man can ever gain a thorough knowledge of the phraseology of the New Covenant writers, who is unacquainted with this version, or has not profited by such writers as derived their knowledge from it. If the present race of divines neglect it, it is to their shame and to their loss.

V There remains only one question of importance, which, in a general consideration of this subject, requires particular notice. Is that Revelation, constituting what is called The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, entire? Have no parts been lost—no spurious writings been added?

These questions have been already discussed in part, in the preceding observations. All that is necessary to be added is, that the oldest records among the Jews and Christians mention the books, both by number and name, which constitute the Old Testament Scriptures; and these are the identical books, both in number and name, that remain in the Hebrew canon to the present day. Not one has been added; not one has been taken away. Nor have we the slightest evidence that even one chapter or paragraph in any one of the books come down to us, has been either added or omitted. And it is the same with the New Testament; we have not lost nor received a single book or chapter which the genuine church of God has ever accounted divinely inspired and canonical. I have diligently examined this question in all the accounts we have from antiquity, and in all the collections of Hebrew and Greek MSS., both of the Old and New Testaments, and their various readings, which the ablest critics have produced to public view; and some of the chief of those MSS. I have collated myself, and most, if not all, of the ancient versions; and I can conscientiously say that we have the sacred oracles, at least in essential sum and substance, as they were delivered by God to Moses and the prophets; and to the church of Christ by Jesus, his evangelists and apostles; and that nothing in the various readings of the Hebrew and Greek MSS. can be found to strengthen any error in doctrine, or obliquity in moral practice. All is safe and sound,—all pure and holy; it is the perfect law of the Lord, that converts the soul; the testimony of the Lord,

that abideth for ever ; and the unadulterated gospel of Jesus Christ, which is able to make men wise unto salvation, through faith in him.

Let the reader be pleased to consider that this is the testimony of one who has examined this subject from the beginning to the end,—from the remotest antiquity to the present times ; who has collated versions and consulted manuscripts not a few ; and has done all this to know the truth, and to receive nothing but the truth, and to recommend nothing as truth in religion but what has come from the God of truth, and leads only to the perfect illumination of the human understanding, the present and eternal glory of God, and the present happiness and final salvation of a lost world. And may I not ask, is not such a testimony infinitely superior to the rash and bold assumptions of such men as are slaves to their passions, who feel, from the unholiness of their own hearts and irregularity of their lives, that it is their interest to find that called the word of God to be false or spurious, because they have too much reason to dread the perdition of ungodly men, of which the Scriptures so amply treat ? I might add, too, the superiority of such a testimony to that of those bold and presumptuous men who have never examined the question, and were as incapable of examining the streams which have proceeded from the fountain, as they were of tracing those streams to the fountain itself ! Of what worth is the testimony of such men against the testimony of God, and of the whole church of Christ, through all ages ; and of the best, wisest, and most learned men that ever existed ? Well may it be said here, and said with triumph, What is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord ?

Controversies there have been about certain words found in some MSS. and not in others, though nearly of the same meaning ; and in the Old Testament, two geographical verses, Josh. xxi. 35, 36, which have been

proscribed by the Masora, and left out of some editions of the Hebrew text, but are found in the most authentic MSS. ; and one verse in the New Testament, 1 John v. 7, which is omitted in the Greek MSS., but is found in the Vulgate and the modern versions. The geography of Josh. xxi. 35, 36, is found 1 Chron. vi. 78, 79 ; and the doctrine of 1 John v. 7, is found John i. 1, 14 ; and in various places, unequivocally, in the New Testament.\*

VI. Having considered at large the apostle's assertion, "Whatsoever was written of old, was written for our learning ;" it will be necessary to point out the grand benefit which each individual may derive from the oracles of God, viz., "That we, through patience and comfort of the Scripture, may have hope." The hope referred to here relates to the immortality of the soul, and the state of glory in endless happiness.

Independently of the Holy Scriptures, scarcely anything was known by the ancient heathens of the nature and immortality of the soul, of the resurrection of the body, or of the final beatitude of both in the realms of eternal blessedness. For here, also, "the world by its wisdom knew not God ;" and it is by his LAW that we have the proper knowledge of sin ; and it is by the GOSPEL that life and immortality have been brought to light. The heathens in general lived like swine, and died like dogs. "They were without HOPE, and without God in

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\* As to the authenticity of this one solitary verse, much has been said for and against it, and the controversy relative to it is not yet terminated. The doctrine contained in it is that of the apostle, whether he wrote the precise words of the seventh verse or not. And even the distinction of the persons in the GODHEAD is sufficiently intimated in Matt. iii. 16, 17.—1. JESUS is baptized in Jordan. 2. The HOLY GHOST descends upon him. 3. The FATHER from heaven proclaims him as his beloved Son.

the world." The grave was to them the house of terrors; and they had no hope of immortality beyond it. They sometimes dreamed of happiness, but had none: they strove to gain it, but it was a fruitless toil: in the pursuit they had no comfort, for they had no infallible director; and they had various ills to bear which they had not patience to endure, because they had no comforter. Hence it was a virtue with them to destroy their own lives when ills became insufferable. Divine Revelation opened the kingdom of heaven to all them that believed; and the Holy Spirit, promised in that Revelation, sustained genuine believers in all their trials, and shed abroad the love of God in their hearts. Jesus Christ incarnated, and dying for the offences of men, and rising again for their justification, blotting out their iniquity by his blood, and sanctifying the soul by his Spirit, gave them an assurance of the glory that was to be revealed, and a preparation for that glorious state. Though in the world they had tribulation, yet in him they had peace. The exceeding great and precious promises of the Scripture not only cheered their hope, but enlivened and supported their souls; for they pleaded them by faith, and God fulfilled them to as many as believed. They went on from strength to strength, fearing God, and worthily magnifying his name: they loved him, whom, though they did not see, yet they powerfully felt; were patient in bearing ill and doing well; and while they loved him, found, in the economy of the grace of God, that all things worked together for their good. They gloried in tribulation, and rejoiced in the hope of the glory of God. Thus, "through patience and comfort of the Scripture they had hope." They found that all prophecies and promises were so made, that the predicted blessings and events became to them prime objects of attention, memory, and desire, till they did come; and then of gratitude, for the permanent blessings they com-

municated. The more they were blessed, the more their gratitude rose ; and the higher it rose, the more abundant was their obedience. This has ever been the state and experience of true believers ; and this is still the inheritance of all the children of God. Sinners alone, and those who will not accept of Christ crucified, sit in darkness, and dwell in the valley of the shadow of death : while true believers walk as children of the light and of the day, in whom there is no occasion of stumbling : they love God, and work righteousness : they love their neighbour as themselves, and labour to promote his utmost welfare ; and they feel this love to be the fulfilling of the law. This power they have from the grace of Christ. This was primitive Christianity : this is modern Christianity, wherever there is faith unfeigned : and this must be Christianity while the sun and the moon endure ; for the gospel is the everlasting gospel, and Jesus Christ, its author, is “ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” Hallelujah ! the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth ! Amen.

I cannot conclude this discourse without citing that fine collect or prayer in the Liturgy of the Church of England, in the service for the second Sunday in Advent, where the epistle of the day includes the text of this discourse ; a prayer to which no Christian of any community would make a single objection.

“ Blessed Lord, who has caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them ; that by patience and comfort of thy holy word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.”

As in this prayer we see how we should receive these Holy Scriptures in order that they may be profitable to

us, I shall make a few remarks on the chief points in this incomparable production, which may serve as an application of the whole discourse.

1. We must ever consider these Scriptures as coming from God, as divinely inspired, and as containing his infallible truth.

2. We should consider, that it is by his grace and blessing that even his own word becomes useful to us, for it is his grace alone that takes away the veil of darkness and ignorance from the mind, without which the pure word of life cannot enter into our hearts, or become the power of God to our salvation.

3. We should be thankful to him that we have his word written and printed, and that we can consult it in our family and in our closets. We should bless God, that it is not shut up in a corner, as it once was in these dominions ; and that we are not liable to persecution and death, for either reading it or hearing it read, or having it in our house ; as our fathers were, while under the domination of the heretical and apostate church of Rome.

4. We must hear these Holy Scriptures read, expounded, and applied in the public worship of God, by a Christian ministry. To social and public worship many promises are made ; nor can we expect that we shall receive God's blessing if we neglect God's ordinances.

5. We must read them ; not be satisfied that we have the Holy Scriptures in the house ; we must consult them, and hide this word in our heart, that we sin not against its author. God's statutes should be our songs, our comforters, in the house of our pilgrimage.

6. We should mark what we read, that we may profit by it. We should especially mark such passages as contain promises or threatenings suited to our state, and bring them home to our heart and conscience ; else we

may read often and long, and never come to the knowledge of the truth.

7. We should learn from what we have read and marked, 1. What sort of persons we have been—born in sin, and children of wrath. 2. What sort of persons we now are—sinners, penitents, believers, backsliders, cold-hearted, zealous, lukewarm, or what else, as the Scripture, conscientiously applied, will teach us. 3. What sort of persons we must be before we can be happy, and before we can enter into the kingdom of God.

8. We must inwardly digest it—carefully ponder it in our heart—consider well its nature—that we must not rest in its promises, as if it were enough that they are in our Bibles, for they are but the signs of things; and it is the things, not the signs, that we must feed on. The word bread cannot save a hungry man from perishing; but the thing signified by that word will save the hungry man's life. We must take heed that the words of God are to our souls as earthly bread is to our bodies. We must eat and digest our earthly bread before it can prove nutriment to our bodies; and when this is done, it is transformed into our very substance, so that we derive strength and life from it. In like manner, we should receive the words of God, and by meditation, faith, and prayer, have them ingrafted in us, that the grace and influence promised may be received, and enter into our spiritual being, so that we shall grow thereby, and feel that our souls have as truly received power and life by means of the Holy Scriptures, as our bodies receive strength and life by the bread that perisheth.

9. We must so profit by this hearing, reading, marking, learning, and inwardly digesting these holy words, that we shall acquire patience to enable us to bear persecutions, afflictions, or the ills of life; that we shall even enjoy comfort while passing through them, by receiving



a brighter evidence of our title to everlasting life ; and thus be enabled to pass through things temporal, so as not to lose those that are eternal.

10. We must never forget that these Scriptures are the gift of God, and that the blessed hope of everlasting life is given to us in and by Jesus Christ our Lord ; that we have no merit ; that we deserve no good ; that our pardon, holiness, and final salvation come all through his infinitely meritorious sacrificial death ; that through him alone we come unto the Father, and that there is no other name given under heaven to men, whereby we can be saved.

Taking all these things into our deepest consideration, we may in all our reading and hearing these Holy Scriptures, express ourselves in the following appropriate words, and thus conclude all such religious exercises with prayer and praise.

### I.

INSPIRER of the *ancient seers*,

Who wrote from *thee* the sacred page ;

The same in all succeeding years ;

To us in our degenerate age,

The *spirit of thy word* impart,

And *breathe the life* into our heart !

### II.

While now thine oracles we read,

With earnest prayer and strong desire,

O let thy Spirit from thee proceed,

Our souls t' awaken and inspire ;

Our weakness help, our darkness chase,

And guide us by the light of grace !

### III.

Whene'er in error's paths we rove,

The living God, through sin, forsake ;

Our conscience by thy word reprove ;

Convince, and bring the wanderers back ;

Deep wounded by thy Spirit's sword,  
And then by Gilead's balm restored.

## IV

The sacred lessons of thy grace,  
Transmitted through thy word, repeat ;  
And train us up in all thy ways,  
To make us in thy will complete ;  
Fulfil thy love's redeeming plan,  
And bring us to a perfect man !

## V.

Furnished out of thy treasury,  
O may we always ready stand ,  
To help the souls redeemed by thee,  
In what their various states demand ;  
To teach, convince, correct, reprove,  
And build them up in holiest love !

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POSTSCRIPT.

To several it may appear, that I should make an apology for attempting to treat so vast a subject in the compass of a sermon of but ordinary length. I feel this, and do not hesitate to make the apology. But still, some general principles relative to the divine authenticity of the sacred writings should be put into the hands of the common people, that they may be fortified against both the *sly* and *scurrilous* attacks now so frequently made against that book from which, under God, they derive their present comfort, and their hope of future bliss. That book which is the means of lightening the burdens of life, which affords them songs in the house of their pilgrimage, and which they see to be the grand

instrument used by the mercy of God to exalt the human character, by pointing out the infallible cure for that deadly moral malady which has seized upon the whole family of man. It is this word of truth, applied by that Spirit of God so abundantly promised in it, which can lead them to the true fountain of health and blessedness, from which alone they can derive those influences that change the heart and the whole frame of life, producing glory to God in the highest, and diffusing peace and good will among men. In that little-known, much-neglected, and utmost northern possession of the far-extended government of the British crown, Zetland, where the preceding discourse was first preached in that form in which it now appears, infidelity has dared to make its approaches, though, thank God, with little success! Those islanders, at once curious and intelligent, saw that an attempt of this kind, to vindicate the ways of God to man, would be no discredit to their country; and rejoiced to observe, from arguments and observations not in common use, that they had additional proofs that the foundation of their faith stood firm, and that they could never be ashamed to speak with their enemies in the gate; and on this account they wished to see the great outline at least in a permanent form. Cheerfully have I met that wish, though conscious of imperfections in every part, principally owing to the narrowness of the limits by which I was circumscribed. It will be at once seen that I do not detail the arguments of others, nor any indeed that are in common use. I had no authorities then at hand, and I have consulted none since; as far as I know, the manner in which the preceding observations are made, is new; nor am I aware that the same materials have ever been thus applied. May that God, whose revelation to man this discourse

endeavours to illustrate and defend, give his blessing to this well-meant attempt, so that every one that reads may be induced to give glory to him for his unspeakable gift.\*

*Lerwick, Zetland,  
July 2, 1826.*

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\* The sermon to which this "postscript" is appended, was published in a separate form, and entitled, "God's Mercy in giving a Revelation of his Will to Man, and his Providence in Preserving that Revelation from Corruption and Decay, manifested in a Discourse on Rom. xv. 4. Delivered in Lerwick, Zetland, July 2, 1826. By Adam Clarke, LL. D., F. A. S., Member of the Royal Irish Academy, of the Geological Society of London, and of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, &c., &c., &c. London: Joseph Butterworth and Son. 1827." It was preceded by a dedication, as follows: "To the GENTRY and INHABITANTS in GENERAL, of the town of LERWICK, this discourse, delivered before them, July 2, 1826, and published at their request, is dedicated, as a small but sincere token of grateful respect, in return for that urbanity and kindness with which they treated a stranger during his short residence in their interesting country,

"By their firm and affectionate friend,

"ADAM CLARKE."

The postscript in the first edition was dated "Haydon Hall, Middlesex, 1827;" and the sermon itself was pretty liberally circulated by its benevolent author, in the way of gratuitous distribution. The writer of this note shared in his favours.—EDITOR.

## SERMON XXXII.

### THE LOVE OF GOD TO A LOST WORLD.

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JOHN iii. 16.

*Οὕτω γὰρ ἠγαπήσεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενὴ ἐδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστευὼν εἰς αὐτὸν, μὴ ἀποληται, ἀλλ' ἐχῇ ζωὴν αἰώνιον.\**

“ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

THESE words form a part of that most interesting and important conversation which our Lord held with a Jewish ruler, called Nicodemus, who came to him by night, in order to get information on a subject of the utmost consequence to the peace and salvation of his soul. The subject was one generally acknowledged in the Jewish creed ; but by most it was grievously perverted or misunderstood. It was, in its spirit, no less than this : Of what nature is that change which must pass upon the heart of man, in order to fit him for the kingdom of heaven ; and by what means can that change be effected ? That this was the object of this ruler's inquiry is evident from our Lord's answer ; for when he

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\* I place the original here, because it is frequently referred to in the discourse.

had addressed him with "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God (which he founded on the evidence of his miraculous works), for no man can do these miracles which thou doest, except God be with him ; Jesus answered and said, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again (or from above), he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Nicodemus, astonished that this most important business should be put on such an issue, and not clearly understanding the figure used by our Lord, cries out, "How can a man be born when he is old ? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born ?"

Our Lord, now finding that his attention was deeply fixed, and all the feelings of his self-interest strongly excited, enters into an explanation of the figure he had used ; and, referring to the Jewish mode of admitting proselytes into the Jewish church by baptism, shows, that as the change is of a spiritual nature, it must be accomplished by a spiritual agent ; and to accomplish such a change, the washing the body with water should be used only as a means, and considered as a type ; and to illustrate his own meaning adds, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God ;" urging at the same time, the utter insufficiency of means, if separated from the end ; for "that which is born of the flesh is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit ;" as if he had said, Earthly or human agency can produce no other than earthly or human results ; they can neither effect, nor be substitutes for, moral and spiritual changes ; as they begin with the flesh, so they must terminate there ; and nothing less than a celestial energy can produce such a spiritual and moral change in the soul, as shall be sufficient to qualify it for the enjoyment of the kingdom of God.

Finding the astonishment of Nicodemus to increase, as he was totally ignorant both of the spiritual agent who was to accomplish the change, and of the manner in which it must be performed ; he farther illustrates his meaning, and the nature of the work, by a most appropriate simile drawn from the wind, and the effects which it produces : “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again : the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” As if he had said, Though the manner in which this new birth is effected by the Divine Spirit be incomprehensible to thee, thou must not on this ground suppose it to be impossible ; the wind bloweth in a variety of directions ; thou hearest its sound, perceivest its operation by the motion of the trees, &c., and feelest it on thy own body ; but thou canst not discern the air itself ; thou only knowest that it exists, by the effects which it produces : so is every one that is born of the Spirit—the effects are as discernible and as sensible as those of the wind ; but itself thou canst not see.

As the Jewish teacher was still slow of heart to understand, supposing, with the rest of his countrymen, that salvation was to be procured by an exact observance of rites, commands, and ordinances ; spiritual agents and spiritual changes being entirely out of the question ; our Lord deservedly chides him, who, while he professed to be “a guide of the blind, a light of them that are in darkness, and an instructor of babes,” should be ignorant of a doctrine so essentially necessary to his own salvation and that of others ; and then takes occasion to enter at large into the subject, and to show that his salvation, and that of a whole lost world, must be effected, not by circumcision, washing, or sacrificial rites, but by the pure

mercy of God ; and that the person whom he considered in no other light than that of a teacher come from God, was the *Son of man*, the promised Messiah, *God's only-begotten Son*, whom, in his infinite *love* to perishing man, he had now sent into the world to become an expiatory victim for the sin of the world ; that they who believe in him should receive remission of sins, and that spiritual change which would not only prevent them from *perishing*, but entitle them to *eternal life*.

Having thus introduced the passage before us, we may collect from it the following particulars :—

I. The WORLD, the whole human race, was in a ruinous condemned state, in danger of *perishing everlastingly*, and without power to rescue itself from the impending destruction.

II. God, through the impulse of his own infinite love and innate goodness, provided for its rescue and salvation, by *giving his only-begotten Son* to die for it.

III. From this it appears, that the sacrifice of Jesus was the only means by which the redemption of man could be effected, and that it is absolutely sufficient to accomplish this gracious design ; for it would have been inconsistent with the wisdom of God to have appointed a sacrifice greater in itself, or less in its merit, than the positive necessities of the case required.

IV That sin must be an inconceivable evil, and possess an indescribable malignity, when it required no less a sacrifice to make atonement for it, than that offered by God manifested in the flesh.

V We learn that no man is *saved* through this sacrifice, but he who *believes* ; i. e., who credits what God has spoken concerning Christ, his sacrifice, the end for which it was offered, and the way in which it is to be applied, in order to its becoming effectual.



VI. That those who *believe* receive a double benefit; viz.,\* 1. They are exempted from *eternal perdition*—"That they should not perish." 2. They are brought to *eternal glory*—"That they should have everlasting life." And this double benefit proves, 1. That man is *guilty*, and therefore exposed to punishment. 2. That he is *impure*, and therefore unfit for glory.

I. The words of the text plainly imply, that what our Lord terms the *world* here, was in danger of everlasting perdition. But to understand his meaning fully, it will be necessary to examine the import of the word.

The term WORLD, ὁ κόσμος, has several acceptations in Scripture, which are however reducible to one grand ideal meaning: 1. It signifies the *whole mundane fabric*, or *system of our universe*; the visible heavens and earth; the whole solar or planetary system. And as the original term signifies to *adorn*, *ornament*, or *beautifully arrange* anything, it was with great propriety applied to the heavens and all their host, and the earth and its fulness, to express, in some measure, the *beautiful order*, *harmony*, *splendour*, and *perfection* of the whole, as a work highly worthy of that infinite wisdom which had planned it, of the power by which the plan was executed, and of the goodness which proposed, by this creation, the most beneficent ends.

It was worthy of remark that the splendid ornamenting and plaiting of the hair, and the decoration of their persons with gold and splendid apparel, to which the women of higher rank, both among the Greeks and Romans, were extravagantly attached, is termed by St. Peter, 1 Epist. iii. 3, κόσμος, the same word as in the text, which literally means *world*, but very properly in this place rendered by our translators, *adorning*: "Whose adorning (κόσμος), let it not be that outward *adorning* of

plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel." The ancient statues, where the Roman and Grecian head-dress is represented with the almost endless variety and involutions of plaiting, &c., fully justify the application of the term in the place just quoted; and may at once lead the mind to the original application of the word, when used to express that infinitely complex and harmoniously arranged system of the universe, which when completed and surveyed by the eye of infinite wisdom, was found such as to merit the approbation of the all-perfect Creator. "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good;" Gen. i. 31.

It is scarcely necessary to observe, that the greatest men since the foundation of the earth have acknowledged themselves instructed, delighted, astonished, and lost, in contemplating the skill and economy of the great Creator, in the order, variety, harmony, and perfection of the visible creation.

2. Sometimes the word is restrained in its meaning, and is used to express merely the *habitable globe*, or that part which was immersed in the waters of the deluge, 2 Pet. iii. 6, as this is that part of the universe in which human beings are more particularly interested.

3. As in this creation God has provided an abundant supply for the wants of all creatures, which he deals out in the course of his providence in the most beautiful and impressive order, not only by the vicissitude of the seasons, but also by that endless variety of properties in the vegetable world, by which all its productions are adapted to the necessities and state of animal nature, and come to their perfection at different times, so as to afford the means of nourishment in continual and regular succession; therefore the term is used, not only to express a *sufficiency of earthly goods or worldly possessions*

(Matt. xvi. 26), but also *abundance* or *vast profusion*; and this is the meaning of the word in that remarkable passage of James, iii. 6, “The tongue is, ὁ κόσμος τῆς ἀδικίας, a *vast system*, a *profusion* or *abundance* of *iniquity*,” and, from the same ideal meaning, it carries with it sometimes the notion of a *promiscuous crowd* or *multitude*, as in John xii. 19: “The Pharisees said, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold the WORLD (ὁ κόσμος, a *vast crowd*) is gone after him.” This particular meaning of the original is preserved in the French phrase *tout le monde*, “all the world,” for *all* or the *majority* of the people in that place.

4. As God seemed, for nearly two thousand years, to have concentrated his regards among the Jewish people, and to have taken into his especial care the land of Canaan, as if he had no other people and no other country to care for; hence the term became applied to that land which God promised to Abraham, Rom. iv. 13: “For the promise that he should be the heir τοῦ κόσμου, of the *world*,” i. e., the promise that he and his posterity should inherit the land of Canaan; which was given them by God’s free bounty, and not as any reward for legal observances or moral obedience.

5. By an easy transition, it became applied to those who inhabited that land, namely, the Jews; who seemed for so long a time to be God’s only people—his whole world. In this sense it is frequently used by St. John in this Gospel; see chap. xiv. 30, where Satan seems to be intended as the “prince (or ruler) of this *world*,” i. e., of the Jews; their wickedness being at that time so great and desperate. See also chap. i. 10, vii. 7, xii. 19, xv. 18, 19, xvi. 33, where the Jews, or inhabitants of the promised land, then called Judæa, seem to be particularly meant.

6. When we consider the beautiful order of the taber-

nacle and temple service, and the whole of the Jewish ritual, as appointed by God ; which, although it was not the substance, was a well-defined and very expressive “shadow of good things to come ;” which the Jews, abusing from its proper signification, vainly trusted in for salvation ; we need not wonder that the term *κοσμος*, “world,” was applied to it in its original meaning ; as in Gal. iv. 3, *Στοιχεια του κοσμου*, “the elements of the world ;” the types, shadows, and ceremonies of the Jewish religion ; which *κοσμος*, “world,” the apostle says, chap. vi. 14, was crucified to him, and he to it, as he no longer expected salvation by the deeds of the law, or the observance of its rites and ceremonies, but by faith in Christ, who was “the end of the law for justification to all that believed,” Rom. x. 4. The same term is used in the same sense, Col. ii. 8, 20.

7. It means the Gentiles, or nations of the earth, as distinguished from the Jews, they being the great multitude or mass of men called by our Lord, Luke xii. 30, *τα εθνη του κοσμου*, “the nations of the world.” And in this sense St. Paul uses the word, Rom. xi. 11, 12 : “Have they (the Jews) stumbled that they should fall ? God forbid : but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, *πλουτος κοσμου*, and the diminishing of them be the riches of the Gentiles ; how much more their fulness ?” In which quotation, “the riches of the world,” in the first clause of ver. 12, is explained by “the riches of the Gentiles,” in the latter clause of the same verse. And the *καταλλαγη κοσμου*, “the reconciling of the world,” ver. 15, manifestly implies the opening the door of salvation to the Gentiles, that they might be reconciled to God, and made heirs with the believing Jews, according to the hope of an endless life. It seems to be used in the same sense, 1 Cor. i. 20, 21 : “Where

is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe;" i. e., the Gentiles, with all their boasted wisdom and philosophy, could not attain to any correct notions even of the great First Cause of all things; as their writings, yet on record, abundantly confirm.

8. In 1 Cor. xi. 32, it seems to signify all the disobedient and unbelieving, both of Jews and Gentiles, who finally reject the counsel of God against themselves: "We are chastened—that we should not be condemned with the world:" though here, perhaps, the approaching desolation of the Jews may be principally intended.

9. Lastly, as the word is applied, in its primitive and original meaning, to the whole system of Nature, and particularly to the earth and its fulness; by a very easy metonymy, the container being put for the contained, it means all the inhabitants of the earth—all nations, classes, and kindreds of mankind; the whole human race: this is its meaning in the text, and in the verse immediately following: "God so loved *τον κοσμον*, the world (the whole human race), that he gave his only-begotten Son," &c. "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world, through him, might be saved." And again, chap. vi. 33: "The bread of God is he who cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world;" i. e., as God has made a plentiful provision, by the manna from heaven, for all the Israelites in the wilderness, and by the productions of the earth, for the nourishment and support of all human beings; so, by the incarnation and death of his Son Jesus Christ, he has made a full, perfect, and sufficient atonement, sacrifice, and oblation for the sins of the whole world, and for the salvation of all men: see

also chap. xiv. 31, and xvii. 24. The same apostle uses the term in the same sense, 1 John ii. 2: "He is the propitiation (ἱλασμος, the atoning sacrifice) for our sins," i. e., apostles and believing Jews; "and not for ours only, but also περι ὅλου του κοσμου, for the whole of the world," i. e., Gentiles as well as Jews—all the descendants of Adam. Where, let it be observed, the apostle does not say that he died for any select part of the inhabitants of the earth, or for some out of every nation, tribe, and kindred, but for *all mankind*; and the attempt to limit the meaning of the expression here, or that in the text, is a violent outrage against the plain grammatical meaning of God's word, and the infinite benevolence of his nature. In short, the assertion in the text is the same, in spirit and design, with this most solemn declaration: "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live," Ezek. xxxiii. 11. And with the following: "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth," 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4. And, "He is the Saviour of all men, specially of those who believe," 1 Tim. iv. 10; for "he gave his life a ransom for all," 1 Tim. ii. 6; and therefore he is the one or only Mediator between God and man, ver. 5; the two grand parties in this business, the Offended and the offenders, the Judge and the criminals.

These are the plain and forcible declarations of Scripture; and we shall, on a further examination of this subject, have the most satisfactory evidence that the streams are precisely of the same nature with the Fountain which produced them; or, in other terms, that the nature of God proclaims the same sentiment which is expressed by the letter of his word.

It will no doubt be observed that, in all the acceptations of the term *world*, which I have collected and examined in the preceding quotations, I have not produced that for which so many good people have contended, viz., the *elect* world; meaning, according to those who use this term, “a certain number of persons chosen in Christ to eternal life, out of all the nations of the earth; all others being passed by, reprobated, or left to perish in their sins, without atonement or Saviour.” I must confess, I have not produced this meaning because I did not find it; and after all my most careful researches, it appears to me that neither the term nor the thing is found in the oracles of God; and it has ever been a matter of astonishment to me that any soul of man, partaking at all of the divine nature, or knowing anything of the ineffable love and goodness of God, should have ever indulged the sentiment; or have laboured to prove that the God whose name is Mercy, and whose nature is love, and “who hateth nothing that he hath made,” should, notwithstanding, have a sovereign, irrespective, eternal love to a few of the fallen human race; together with a sovereign, irrevocable, and eternal hatred to the great mass of mankind; according to which the salvation of the former, and the perdition of the latter, have been from all eternity absolutely and irrevocably fixed, pre-ordained, and decreed!

I have met with these sentiments. I have seen and heard them maintained with great acrimony. I have seen them sometimes opposed in the same spirit. I looked on it, received instruction, was grieved, and passed on, with—

——— Tantæne animis cælestibus iræ?

In heavenly minds can such fierce passions dwell!

That the whole human race needed this interposition

of God's infinite love, is evident ; for the Scriptures have unequivocally declared that all have sinned ; all have corrupted their way ; they are all gone astray, and altogether become abominable ; they are fallen from the image of God, righteousness and true holiness ; and are inwardly corrupt, and outwardly defiled. This doctrine stands in no need of proof ; man is not what God made him ; were the Scriptures silent on the subject, all reason and common sense would at once declare that it is impossible that the infinitely perfect God could make a morally imperfect, much less a corrupt and sinful being. Yet God is the Maker of man ; and he tells us that he made him in his own image, and in his own likeness ; it follows, then, that man has fallen from that state of holiness and perfection in which he was created. And that this fall took place in the head and root of human nature, before any of the generations of men were propagated on the earth, is evident, not only from the declaration of God himself in his word, but also from this strong and commanding fact, that there never was yet discovered a nation or tribe of holy or righteous men in any part of the world ; nor is there a record that any such nation or people was ever known ! This is a truly surprising circumstance ; and a most absolute proof that not only all mankind are now fallen and sinful, but have ever been in the same state ; and that this fall must have taken place, previously to the propagation of mankind ; for had it not taken place in our first parents, before they began to propagate and people the earth, the heads of families and their successors, who might have been born previously to such fall, could not have partaken of their contagion ; and, consequently, must have been the progenitors of nations doing righteousness, loving God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and their neighbour as themselves. But no such nation exists ;



no such nation ever did exist. Thus we find that universal experience and knowledge agree with and confirm the account given in the Book of Genesis of the fall of man. The root being corrupted, the fruit also must be corrupt; the fountain being poisoned, the streams must be impure. All men coming into the world in the way of natural generation, must be precisely the same with him from whom they derive their being:—the body, soul, and spirit of all the descendants of Adam must partake of his moral imperfections; for it is an inflexible and invariable law in nature, that “like shall produce its like.” We, therefore, seeing this total corruption of human nature, no longer hope to gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles.

Experience not only confirms the great but tremendous truth, that all mankind are fallen from the image of God; but it shows us that man has naturally a propensity to do evil, and none to do good; yea, to do evil, when it is demonstrably to his own hurt;—that the great principles of self-love and self-interest weigh nothing against the sinful propensities of his mind; that he is continually and confessedly running to his own ruin; and has, of himself, no power or influence by which he can correct, restrain, or destroy the viciousness of his own nature. In short, that he lieth in the wicked one, with an unavailing wish, yet without any efficient power, to rise. Understanding, judgment, and reason, those so much boasted, strong, and commanding powers of the soul, which should regulate all the inferior faculties, are themselves so fallen, enfeebled, darkened, and corrupted, as to spiritual good, that they see not how to command, and feel not how to perform. There is, therefore, no hope that the man can raise himself from his fall, and replace himself in a state of moral rectitude; for the very principles by which he should rise are themselves equally

fallen with all the rest. Wishing and willing are all that he can exercise ; but these, through want of moral energy, are totally inefficient. God has inspired him with the desire to be saved ; and this alone places him in a salvable state. There is, therefore, in the human soul no self-reviviscent power ; no innate principle which may develope itself, expand, and arise ; all is infirm ; all is wretched, diseased, and helpless. This view of the wretched state of mankind led one of the primitive fathers to consider the whole human race as one great diseased man, lying helpless, stretched out over the whole inhabited globe, from east to west, from north to south ; to heal whom, the omnipotent Physician descended from heavén.

II. This leads me to consider God through the impulse of his own infinite love and innate goodness, providing for the rescue and salvation of the world, by giving his only-begotten Son to die for it : “ God so loved the world.”

It is here asserted, that the love of God was the spring and source of human redemption : and when we consider the fallen, degraded, and corrupt state of the human race, we may rest satisfied that there it must originate, or nowhere. Man could have no claim on the holiness or justice of his Maker, because he had swerved from his allegiance, and broken his law ; nor can we conceive that any other attribute of the Divine nature could be excited in his behalf.

Yet even here is a difficulty ; and one of no ordinary magnitude : how could even this love be moved towards man ? According to the best notions we can form of love, it never exists but in a conviction of some real or fancied excellence or amiableness in its object. Excellence may be esteemed for its own sake ; beauty and

amiableness may be desired on our own account. Love, properly speaking, is composed of desire and esteem ; desire to possess, on account of the beauty or amiableness of the object, esteem for the person on account of mental excellence. On tracing the operation of this passion or affection carefully, we shall find that the desire to possess is scarcely ever, if at all, excited for mere mental excellence ; and that esteem is scarcely ever formed for mere corporeal accomplishments.

The old and the deformed may be esteemed if they have mental excellencies ; and the young and the beautiful may be desired though they have none. But where there is neither beauty nor excellence, real or imaginary, love is never excited.

We may lay it down as an indisputable truth, that God never acts without an infinite reason to justify his conduct. He must ever have a suitable motive to induce him to act, and a proper object to justify the motive. He can never act from caprice or partiality, because he acts from infinite intelligence, and can never be influenced by self-interest. What motive therefore could induce him to place his love upon man ? For what could he desire him ? For what would he esteem him ? Here is the difficulty which no kind of assertions can solve. The common assertion, "he did so because he would," will never satisfy the inquiring mind ; and may be as well applied to acts of vindictive justice as to acts of mere mercy ; and thus the mind will be left under the full empire of doubt, relative to the conduct of God in matters of the most solemn importance, in which its own accountableness and highest interests are particularly concerned, and on which it cannot be too circumstantially informed.

On this inquiry the infinite disparity between God and man will ever present itself to the view—the perfections

and independence of the Creator, and the worthlessness and wickedness of the creature. In deep astonishment we may ask, with one of old, "What is man, that thou shouldst magnify him? and that thou shouldst set thine heart upon him?"—Job vii. 17. In a word, what is the apparent reason why God hath so LOVED the world?

Strange as it may appear, I am led to conclude that we shall not get a satisfactory answer to this question, without having recourse to the creation of man. I will lay down as an axiom, what I think will not be disputed, and what cannot be successfully controverted, that man is the creature of God's love. Let us figure to ourselves, for we may innocently do it, the state of the Divine Nature previously to the formation of the human being. Infinitely happy, because infinitely perfect and self-sufficient, the Supreme Being could feel no wants; to him nothing was wanting, nothing needful. As the good man is satisfied from himself, from the contemplation of his conscious rectitude; so, comparing infinitely great with small things, the Divine Mind was supremely satisfied with the possession and contemplation of its own unlimited excellencies. From unmixed, unsullied goodness, sprang all the endlessly varied attributes, perfections, and excellencies of the Divine Nature; or rather in this principle all are founded, and of this each is an especial modification. Benevolence is, however, an affection inseparable from goodness. God, the all-sufficient, knew that he could in a certain way communicate influences from his own perfections; but the being must resemble himself, to which the communication could be made. His benevolence, therefore, to communicate and diffuse his own infinite happiness, we may naturally suppose, led him to form the purpose of creating intelligent beings, to whom such

communication could be made. He therefore, in the exuberance of his eternal goodness, projected the creation of man, whom he formed in his own image, that he might be capable of those communications. Here then was a motive worthy of eternal goodness—the desire to communicate its own blessedness ; and here was an object worthy of the divine wisdom and power—the making an intelligent creature, a transcript of his own eternity, מֵעַט מֵאֱלֹהִים *meât melohim*, Ps. viii. 5, just less than God, and endowing him with powers and faculties of the most extraordinary and comprehensive nature.

I do not found these observations on the supposition of certain excellencies possessed by man previously to his fall ; I found them on what he is now. I found them on his vast and comprehensive understanding ; on his astonishing powers of ratiocination ; on the extent and endless variety of his imagination or inventive faculty : and I see the proof and exercise of these in his invention of arts and sciences. Though fallen from God, morally degraded and depraved, he has not lost his natural powers : he is yet capable of the most exalted degrees of knowledge in all natural things ; and his knowledge is power.

Let us take a cursory view of what he has done, and of what he is capable : he has numbered the stars of heaven ; he has demonstrated the planetary revolutions, and the laws by which they are governed ; he has accounted for every apparent anomaly in the various affections of the heavenly bodies ; he has measured their distances, determined their solid contents, and weighed the sun !

His researches into the three kingdoms of nature, the animal, vegetable, and mineral, are, for their variety, correctness, and importance, of the highest consideration. The laws of matter, of organized and unorganized beings,

and those chemical principles by which all the operations of nature are conducted, have been investigated by him with the utmost success. He has shown the father of the rain, and who has begotten the drops of dew ; he has accounted for the formation of the snow, the hail-stones, and the ice ; and demonstrated the laws by which the tempest and tornado are governed ; he has taken the thunder from the clouds ; and he plays with the lightnings of heaven !

He has invented those grand subsidiaries of life, the lever, the screw, the wedge, the inclined plane, and the pulley ; and by these means multiplied his power beyond conception. He has invented the telescope, and by this instrument has brought the hosts of heaven almost into contact with the earth. By his engines he has acquired a sort of omnipotency over inert matter ; and produced effects which, to the uninstructed mind, present all the appearance of supernatural agency. By his mental energy he has sprung up into illimitable space, and has seen and described those worlds which an infinite skill has planned, and an infinite benevolence sustains. He has proceeded to all describable and assignable limits, and has conceived the most astonishing relations and affections of space, place, and vacuity ; and yet, at all those limits, he has felt himself unlimited, and still can imagine the possibility of worlds and beings, natural and intellectual, in endless variety beyond the whole. Here is a most extraordinary power,—describe all known or conjectured beings, and he can imagine more ; point out all the good that even God has promised, and he can desire still greater enjoyments !

After having made the boldest excursions to the heavens, he has dared even to the heavens of heavens ; and demonstrated the being and attributes of God, not only by proofs drawn from his works, but by arguments

*à priori*, from which all created nature is necessarily excluded. These are among the boldest efforts of the human mind.

What has man not done? And of what is he not capable? To such powers and energies what limits can be assigned? Do not all his acts show that he is fearfully and wonderfully made? And if such be the shadow, what was the substance? If such be fallen man, what was he before his fall? And what is the necessary conclusion from the whole? It is this: the creature in question was made for God, and nothing less than God can satisfy his infinite desires. His being and his powers give the fullest proof that the saying of the wise man is perfectly correct: "God created man to be immortal; and made him to be an image of his own eternity," Wisd. ii. 23.

"But is not this over-rating human excellence, and enduing man with a dignity and perfection little consistent with the doctrine of the fall?" I answer—No. I have appealed to facts, and facts within the knowledge of all men; and such facts as amply support all the reasoning which has been founded upon them. But after all these proofs of natural excellence, we have ten thousand others of his internal moral depravity, and alienation from the divine life. The general tenor of his moral conduct is an infraction of the laws of his Creator. While lord of the lower world, he is a slave to the vilest and most degrading passions; he loves not his Maker, and is hostile and oppressive to his fellows. In a word, he is as fearfully and wonderfully vile, as he was fearfully and wonderfully made; and all this shows most forcibly that he stands guilty before God, and is in danger of perishing everlastingly.

Now in these two things, the physical and intellectual greatness of man, and his moral depravity and baseness,

lies the reason of human redemption. As he is guilty, polluted, and morally incapable of helping himself, he stands in need of a Redeemer, to save him from everlasting destruction. As he is one of the noblest works of God,—that in which he has manifested his skill, power, and goodness, in the most singular manner,—he is worthy to be redeemed. “For it was not proper,” as St. Athanasius observes, “that those should perish who were once partakers of the image of God:” to save such a creature from such a final destruction of the end for which he was created, was an object worthy the interposition even of God himself. He knew the powers with which he had endued him, and he loves every work of his hand in proportion to the degree of impression it bears of his own excellence. Though man has sinned, and has become universally depraved; yet he has lost none of his essential faculties—they still remain: and the grandeur of the ruins shows the unrivalled excellence and perfection of the original building. God cannot forsake the work of his hands; and he still beholds him as radically the noblest of his creatures. And as the attention of God must be fixed on each of his works in proportion to its excellence, and the greatness of the design for which he had formed it; man, as the most noble of his creatures, and made for the highest ends, must be the object of his peculiar regards. Of no creature but man is it said, that it was made in the image and likeness of God. Neither the thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, cherubim, seraphim, arch-angels, or angels, have shared this honour. It is possible that only one order of created beings could be thus formed. And is it not on this account that Jesus took not upon him the nature of the angels, but the seed of Abraham;—him with whom the covenant of redemption was made for Jews and Gentiles? Now, in this superior



excellence of the human nature, do we not find a solution of the difficulty, why God passed by angels to redeem man ; and why he so loved the human race, as to send his only-begotten Son into the world to die for its redemption ?

III. From this it appears that the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus was the only means by which the world could be redeemed.

Before I enter particularly into the discussion of this point, it will be necessary to say something of Him who is the author of this redemption, and who is here called God's only-begotten Son. When we examine the oracles of God relative to the person and character of this Divine Being, we shall find that they speak of him as God, and clothe him with every attribute essential to the supreme and eternal Deity. I shall quote a few of their sayings, without any particular reference : " He was in the beginning with God ; he was God, and all things were made by him and for him, and without him was nothing made that was made ; and he is before all things, and by him do all things consist. He was God manifest in the flesh ; for that Word which was God, was made flesh, and tabernacled among us ; and in that flesh dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." These are only a few of the sayings of the inspired writers relative to this subject : but they are full and conclusive ; they are oracles from heaven, and have no delusive meaning, and any one of them is sufficient to prove the point. " But did his conduct among men justify this high character ?" Yes ; most amply. From the first impression made by the reported miracles of Christ, Nicodemus could say, " No man can do the miracles which thou dost, except God be with him." And every reasonable man, on the same evidence, would draw the same inference. But

we certainly can go much farther, when we find him, by his own authority and power, without the invocation of any foreign help, with a word, or a touch, and in a moment, restoring sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, hearing to the deaf, and health to the diseased, cleansing the lepers, and raising the dead. These are works which could only be effected by the omnipotence of God. This is incontestable. Therefore while the cleansing of the lepers, and the feeding to the full so many thousands of men and women, with five barley loaves and two small fishes, stand upon such irrefragable testimony, as that contained in the four Evangelists, Jesus Christ must appear, in the eye of unbiassed reason, as the Author of nature, the true and only Potentate, the almighty and everlasting God, howsoever obscured he may seem to be by dwelling in flesh.

In the text he is entitled *Υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ*, *his only-begotten Son*. It is of some moment to understand the proper meaning of this expressson. The term has two general acceptations in Scripture: it signifies, 1. The *only child* in a family. 2. The *most beloved*, or him who is dearest to his parents, though there may be other children in the family. In this sense it answers to the Hebrew יָחִיד *yachid*, the *beloved one* or *only one*; or what we translate *darling*, Ps. xxii. 20, “Deliver my *darling*, יֵחִידָתִי *yechidati*, from the power of the dog;” which is by the Septuagint rendered *την μονογενη μου*, *my only-begotten*. In Ps. xxv. 16, we translate the same Hebrew term יָחִיד *yachid*, “desolate;” but the Septuagint render it *μονογενης*, *only-begotten*. The same term is translated in the same way, Ps. xxxv. 17, “Rescue—my *darling*, יֵחִידָתִי *yechidati*, from the lions;” Sept. *αποκαταστησον—απο λεοντων την μονογενη μου*, “Rescue my *first-born* from the lions.” It is used in the same sense by the apocryphal writers. So in the Wisdom of Solomon,

chap. vii. 22 : “ For wisdom, which is the worker of all things,\*taught me ; for in her is an understanding spirit, holy, *one only*, μονογενης, *only-begotten*.” See the margin. It is in the second of the two senses that it is taken in the text, and answers to *dear, highly prized, well or best beloved*. See Matt. iii. 17, “ This is my *beloved Son*.” Col. i. 13, “ He hath translated us into the kingdom of his *dear Son*,” &c. The proper import of the phrase in the text is expressed by St. Mark, xii. 6, “ Having yet *one Son*, his *well-beloved*, he sent him also last unto them” —ἐνα υἱον ἔχων ἀγαπητον. This speaks of the same thing as the text does ; and ἐνα υἱον ἀγαπητον, *the one beloved Son*, is exactly the same as the τον υἱον αὐτου τον μονογενη, *the only-begotten Son*. Now, our blessed Lord is called so as to his human nature, because of the peculiarity of his generation. No human being was ever produced in the same way—in this respect he is the ONLY-BEGOTTEN Son of God. The angel Gabriel, sent from God, thus announces his conception and birth to the Virgin Mary, “ The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee ; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” Luke i. 35. I have, in a note on the preceding text, demonstrated, by an argument that can never be overthrown, that this is spoken only of the human nature of Christ ; for as to his divine nature, that, being properly and essentially God, cannot be either begotten or produced ; much less eternally begotten, which, howsoever explained, is in perfect opposition to reason and common sense ; and as far as a sentiment can be so, is destructive of the eternal and essential deity of Jesus. By not attending to the proper meaning of *only-begotten Son*, some of the fathers, as well as the moderns, have fallen into strange absurdities. So Gregory Nyssen begins his fifth oration, *In Christi Resurrec-*

*tionem*, with these words, *Ευφημησωμεν σημερον, τον μονογενη θεον*, Let us celebrate to-day the *only-begotten God* ! This is speaking out—but he was probably not aware of the dangerous tendency of such unguarded expressions ; though he has others full as exceptionable. It would be easy to multiply quotations more exceptionable and more dangerous, on this head, from many of those primitive fathers who are reputed orthodox : this, however, must be deferred to a future opportunity. But, as the salvation of the whole human race stands or falls with the proper, essential, underived deity of Jesus Christ, we must take heed, lest, while we profess to hold the thing, we destroy the foundation on which it rests.

But it is not in this or such like insulated terms that we are to seek the dignity and godhead of the Redeemer of mankind. We must have recourse to such scriptures as those which I have already produced ; and we must not confound the Godhead with the manhood : we must carefully distinguish the two natures in Christ—the divine and human. As MAN, he laboured, fainted, hungered, was thirsty ; ate, drank, slept, suffered, and died. As GOD, he created all things, governs all, worked the most stupendous miracles ; is omniscient, omnipresent, and is the Judge as well as the Maker of the whole human race. As God and man, combined in one person, he suffered *for man* ; died *for man* ; rose again *for man* ; commands repentance and remission of sins to be preached through the world in his name ; forgives iniquity ; dispenses the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost ; is Mediator between God and man ; and the sole Head and Governor of his church.

He was man, that he might suffer and die for the offences of man ; for justice and reason both required that the nature that sinned should suffer for the sin. But he

was God, that the suffering might be stamped with an infinite value ; and thus, instead of merely suffering on account of sin, might be a sufficient sacrifice and atonement for the sin of the world. Were Jesus to be considered merely as man, then it is evident that his sufferings and death could be no atonement for sin, because they could have no merit. If he be considered merely as God, then he could neither suffer nor die ; and, consequently, man must be unredeemed ; for without shedding of blood there is no remission : but if we consider him as God-man, we see him capable of suffering ; and find that the purgation of our sins was by the merit of the blood which he shed in his passion and death. Thus, as one has said, “ He was man, that he might have blood to shed ; and God, that when shed, it might be of infinite value.” But while we distinguish the two natures in Jesus Christ, we must not suppose that the sacred writers always express these two natures by distinct and appropriate names : The names given to our blessed Lord are used indifferently to express his whole nature : Jesus, Christ, Jesus the Christ, the Messiah, Son of Man, Son of God, beloved Son, only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour, &c., &c., are all repeatedly and indiscriminately used to designate his whole person as God and man, in reference to the great work of human salvation, which, from its nature, could not be accomplished but by such an union.

All who are taught of God use these terms in the same way. When we speak of Jesus Christ, we do not mean the man Christ Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary ; nor him who is the fulness of the Godhead bodily : but we mean both ; the great God, even our Saviour, Jesus Christ, “ who for us men, and our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnated by the Holy Ghost of

the Virgin Mary, and was made man." In this sense I invariably use these terms, when the contrary is not specified.

IV From all these we may be clearly convinced that sin must be an inconceivable evil, and possess an indescribable malignity, when it required no less a sacrifice to make atonement for it than that offered by God manifested in the flesh.

It is said in the text that God gave this glorious personage through his love to the world. Now, it is most evident from the Scriptures, that this giving implies the intention of God that he should be considered as a sacrificial offering, and die for the sins of mankind. This our Lord himself clearly expresses: "The son of man came—to GIVE HIS LIFE a ransom for many," Matt. xx. 28. "I LAY DOWN MY LIFE for the sheep," John x. 15. And that this was a sacrificial and atoning death, we find, because without it neither repentance nor remission of sins could be effectually preached in the world. "Thus it behoved Christ to SUFFER, and to rise from the DEAD, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." And in his institution of the Eucharist, he says, that "the cup represents the BLOOD of the new covenant, which was SHED for the remission of sins," Matt. xxvi. 27, 28, Luke xxiv. 46, 47. And, because God gave him for this very purpose, therefore is he called "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world, John i. 29. And on this account it is said that "we were not redeemed with corruptible things, but with the PRECIOUS BLOOD (*τιμωρ αίματος*, the VALUABLE BLOOD) of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot; who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world," 1 Pet. i. 18—20. And,

“he GAVE HIMSELF A RANSOM for all,” 1 Tim. ii. 6. And St. Paul expressly says, that “the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ, GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, that he might redeem us from all iniquity,” Tit. ii. 13, 14. So that this GIVING evidently means a sacrificial offering ; a giving up life unto death ; and this was the very design of God in sending his Son into the world.

And from what is said of this in the Scriptures we learn that such an offering or sacrifice was indispensably necessary : for had it not been so, God would not have required it ; and that he did require it, is most clearly and explicitly revealed. The Mosaic institutions derived their authority and origin from God. In them he required that the lives of certain animals should be offered at his altar, as a redemption-price for the lives of transgressors : and yet in these “sacrifices, offerings, burnt-offerings, and sacrifices for sin,” which were offered according to this very LAW, “he took no pleasure,” because it was “not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin.” See Ps. xl. 6—8, collated with Heb. x. 4—7. Nor had these any significancy, nor could have any effect, but as they referred to the sacrificial offering of the life of our blessed Lord, who was that Lamb of God (that One which God alone could provide), that could take away the sin of the world ; and which was, in the purpose of God, SLAIN from the foundation of the world, Rev. xiii. 8. And therefore the apostle justly argues that the law, in these sacrificial rites, was only the shadow of good things to come, and not the very image or substance of the things, and consequently could not make the comers thereunto perfect ; could neither pardon nor purify them, Heb. x. 1. The whole sacrificial system being little more than a continual remembrance of the demerit and destructive nature of

sin, and of the utter impossibility that any human means could be effectual to remove its guilt and deserved punishment; and therefore the incarnation, passion, and death of the Lord Jesus, were intended in God's infinite counsel, and provided by his indescribable love, to do what the law could not perform: "God so loved the world."

From this view of the subject I am led to contend,—

1. That this sacrifice was indispensably necessary, else God had not required it.

2. That nothing less, or of inferior worth, could have answered the end, else God would have required and provided that; for it would be derogatory to his wisdom to require or provide less than was necessary fully to accomplish his design; for thus the effect could either not be produced, or if produced, be brought about with such a penury of means as would little comport with the dignity and sufficiency of the divine plenitude; and would leave endless place for doubt in the human breast, whether such scanty means could be considered sufficient to accomplish so great an end.

1. It would be equally inconsistent with God's wisdom, as well as with his justice, to require more than what was absolutely necessary; as this would imply, 1. A needless display of means to accomplish an end, which, when produced, could not justify the means employed. 2. It would imply an unjust exaction of more payment than the sum of the debt, and thus be an impeachment of the divine equity.

2. It appears from the nature of this sacrifice, that, could it be conceived possible that a greater sacrifice had been necessary, yet it must appear impossible that such an one could have been provided; for a greater than God manifested in the flesh could not have been pro-



duced; for God himself could furnish nothing greater than the Almighty's fellow. Zech. xiii. 7. "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and smite the man that is MY FELLOW, saith the Lord of Hosts. Smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered," See Matt. xxvi. 31, where these words are quoted by our Lord, as referring to his sacrificial death : and see John x. 30, where the same sentiment is delivered in the words, "I and the Father ARE ONE, *εγω και ο Πατηρ εν εσμεν*." Thus, God gave the greatest gift his eternal plenitude could provide ; and beyond which heaven itself had nothing more valuable or glorious to impart.

3. As everything that God does is of infinite worth and value, and must be sufficient to accomplish the end for which it was designed ; we may therefore safely conclude, that "the death of Jesus Christ upon the cross for our redemption, was a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world ;" for, such a sacrifice God did require, as we have already seen ; and it was for this very purpose that he did require it, viz., that they who believe in him might not perish, but have everlasting life. And as there is in it such a fulness of merit, it must excite the strongest confidence in them who flee to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel.

4. As nothing less than this infinitely meritorious sacrifice could have been sufficient for the redemption of the world, we see in it the destructive nature of sin, and its (anything but) infinite demerit. If we look on sin in itself, our minds get soon bounded in their views, by particular acts of transgression, of which we can scarcely perceive the turpitude and demerit ; as we neither consider the principle whence they have proceeded, the carnal mind which is enmity against God ; nor the nature

and dignity of that God against whom they are committed. But when we consider the infinite dignity of Jesus, whose passion and death were required to make atonement<sup>d</sup> for sin, then we shall see it as exceeding sinful, *καθ' ὑπερβολήν*, that its vitiosity and turpitude are beyond all comparison and description. Rom. vii. 13.

5. We not only see the exceeding sinfulness of sin in the grandeur of the sacrifice required for its expiation; but we see also, in the dignity of the redeeming nature, the dignity of the nature to be redeemed. Had the human nature been inferior to the angelic nature, the sacrifice of an angel or archangel might have been deemed sufficient to make an atonement for the sin of man: though even this could not have possessed infinite merit; and therefore, even allowing the inferiority of the nature of man, must have been in many important respects inefficient. But so radically great and excellent was the human nature, that nothing less than the incarnation of God could be sufficient: and by this means, this being, who was made in the divine image, and in the most intimate union with God, was restored to this image; and, consequently, to the same union. But as I have spoken particularly on this subject already, See p. 442, 443, I need not extend the argument any further here.

V But we must not suppose that because such an infinitely meritorious sacrifice has been offered for the salvation of the human race, that therefore they must necessarily be saved, merely because the offering has been made. Our Lord guards us against this error, by showing us in the text that the gift of God's love becomes effectual to the salvation of them only who believe: "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Now, as what the law speaks, it speaks to them who are under the law ; so, what the gospel speaks, it speaks to them who are the gospel—who live in a Christian country, and have the opportunity of reading and hearing the word of life. As those who sin under the law, shall be judged by the law ; so those who sin under the gospel, shall be judged by the gospel. The text, therefore, does not relate to those heathen countries to which the word of this salvation has not yet been sent.

But what is that believing to which this salvation is annexed ? I need not discuss this subject here at large, having treated it in the most circumstantial manner in a subsequent discourse on 'Acts xvi. 30, entitled, "Salvation by Faith." It is enough to state, in general terms, that *believing* here implies, *giving credit to what God has spoken concerning Christ*, his sacrifice, the *end* for which it was offered, and the *way* in which it is to be applied in order to its becoming effectual.

I. It does appear to me that it is absolutely necessary to believe the proper and essential Godhead of Christ, in order to be convinced that the sacrifice which has been offered is a sufficient sacrifice. Nothing less than a sacrifice of infinite merit can atone for the offences of the whole world, and purchase for mankind an ETERNAL GLORY ; and if Jesus be not properly, essentially, and eternally God, he has not offered, he could not offer, such a sacrifice. The sacred writers are nervous and pointed on this subject, as we have already seen ; nor can I see that any sinner, deeply convinced of his fallen guilty state, can rely on the merit of his sacrifice for salvation, unless he have a plenary conviction of this most glorious and momentous truth. As eternal glory must be of infinite value, if it be purchased by Christ, or be given as the consequence of his meritorious death,

then that death must be of infinite merit, or else it could not procure what is of infinite value. So that, could we even suppose the possibility of the pardon of sin without such a merit, we could not possibly believe that eternal glory could be procured without it. It must be granted, if Christ be but a mere man, as some think ; or the highest and first of all the creatures of God, as others suppose ; let his actions and sufferings be whatever they may, they are only the obedience and sufferings of an originated and limited being ; and cannot possess infinite and eternal merit ; but the contrary has, I hope, been satisfactorily proved.

2. It is necessary to believe that his sufferings were not accidental, or the mere consequence of Jewish malice and his own inflexible integrity. Jesus was not a martyr, but a sacrifice. Before Jews or their malice existed, his sacrificial death was designed, because it was absolutely necessary ; therefore is he called “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” Here is no martyrdom, no fortuitous suffering ; here is nothing less than a sacrificial offering.

3. It is necessary to believe, to be fully persuaded, that he died for our offences, and rose again for our justification ; that this was the very end or object of his incarnation, passion, and death. That he died for every human soul, for all who are partakers of the same nature which he has assumed ; that the merit and benefits of his death must necessarily extend to all mankind, because he has assumed that nature which is common to all ; nor could the merit of his death be limited to any particular part, nation, tribe, or individuals of the vast human family. It is not the nature of a particular nation, tribe, family, or individual which he has assumed, but the nature of the whole human race ; and “God has made of ONE BLOOD all the nations of men, for to

dwell on all the face of the earth," that all these might be redeemed with one blood ; for he is the kinsman of the whole. The merit of his death must, therefore, extend to every man, unless we can find individuals or families that have not sprung from that stock of which he became incarnated. His death must be infinitely meritorious, and extend in its benefits to all who are partakers of the same nature, because he was God manifested in the flesh ; and to contract or limit that merit, that it should apply only to a few, or even to any multitudes short of the whole human race, is one of those things which is impossible to God himself, because it involves a moral contradiction. He could no more limit the merit of that death than he could limit his own eternity, or contract that love which induced him to undertake the redemption of a lost world.

4. We must believe that the way in which God saves man by Christ, is the way of faith. No human works can here avail ; for, were they ever so pure and perfect, they could not possess infinite merit, because their agent is a limited creature. Nor can any kind of sufferings be more available. I have proved elsewhere, that as sufferings are the effects, either near or remote, of sin, consequently they cannot destroy their cause. They can be no other, in all points of view, than the miseries of a limited and imperfect creature ; and, consequently, cannot have that merit requisite to atone for offences against the Majesty of heaven, or procure for their patient, much less for the whole world, an infinite and eternal weight of glory.

Faith alone, therefore, is left as the means by which the purchased blessings are applied. Although God is just, yet he can be the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus ; of him that believes on and trusts to the infinitely meritorious death of the Son of his love. For

God never can act without a reason, and such a reason as can amply justify his acting. The death of Christ for man is a sufficient reason why God should forgive the man who reposes all his trust and confidence in him. And this very thing is a sufficient reason for God's act, and for man's faith.

I dwell the more particularly on the necessity of considering Christ's death as a meritorious sacrifice, and the necessity of believing in it as such, in order to distinguish the true or thodox or scriptural faith in Christ, from that of Arianism. This latter doctrine, of which most who speak and write seem deplorably ignorant, is built ostensibly on the incomparable merit of Jesus Christ. This is not the Arianism which is spoken of by many of the fathers; for they are continually confounding the doctrine imputed to Arius with that held by multitudes who professed to be his followers, whose doctrine appears to be, in many respects, nearly the same with what is now called Socinianism. The Arianism to which I refer is that of the present day, which is founded in the following scale of intellectual entities and perfections; and which the doctrine of metaphysics has been called in to accredit and support. "The principal things," says a late author, "relating to incorporeal essences or spirits, taught us by Revelation, are the following :

"1st, That God himself is a Spirit, and infinitely the most perfect of all others; whose high dignity and singular majesty we call the Godhead, or Deity.

"2d, That next to God there is another being, originally a pure spiritual essence, which in time assumed thereunto a corporeal substance or body, of a most excellent and superlative nature, who therefore is called the Son of God, or next to him in dignity.

"3d, We are informed also, that in the third degree of

the scale of spiritual essences is one of a peculiar nature, having a near relation to the other two ; and, from his office, has the name of Holy Ghost, as being the sanctifier of men.

“4th, At an immense remove from these we find a fourth class of incorporeal substances, called angels by us, but by the heathens, demons, genii, &c., concerning which we read of various denominations, numbers, and subordinations ; which latter is called the hierarchy of angels, and is usually reckoned threefold, viz. : The first hierarchy contains the three most honorary orders, called seraphim, cherubim, and thrones ; the second hierarchy consists of three intermediate orders, called dominions, virtues, and powers ; the third hierarchy contains the three lowest orders, called principalities, archangels, and angels.”—*Martin's Philology*, article *Metaphysics*, page 180.

This scheme is formed on the philosophical principle of the graduated scale of intelligences, and of entities in general, which maintains that there is no chiasm or break from God, the Fountain of being, to the lowest inorganized particle of matter, or atom ; and that all proceed from the indivisible particle of inert matter, through different forms of organized being, up to animal life ; and through different degrees of animal life up to intellectual ; and through various degrees of intellectual life up to God. Matter being more perfect as it approaches to, or rises from, inertness to organization ; organization being more or less perfect as it approaches to, or recedes from, vitality ; vitality, being more or less perfect as it approaches to, or recedes from, intellectual existence ; and intellectual existence, being more or less perfect, as it approaches to, or recedes from, the ENS ENTIVM, or God. This scheme also supposes that all orders of created

beings are connected by certain links, which partake of the nature of the beings in the ascending and descending scale ; e. g., *animals* and *vegetables* are linked together by the polype, or plant animal ; *fowls* and *reptiles*, by the bat ; *fishes* and *beasts*, by the hippopotamus ; *quadrupeds* and *man*, by the ouran-outang ; and *man* and *angels*, by men of extraordinary powers, such as Plato among the ancients, and Sir Isaac Newton among the moderns.

This graduated scale of entities is highly illustrative of the manifold wisdom of God ; and to it I have no objection, provided the holy and adorable Trinity be left out of the question. From the lowest particle of matter, up to God, the scale may be accurate enough ; but when it attempts to graduate the Sacred Persons in the Holy Trinity, saying, as in the preceding extract, that the Son of God is next in dignity to God ; that “the Holy Ghost is the third degree in spiritual essences, having a near relation to the other two ;” we are not only to receive such assertions with caution, but to reject them in toto, as being utterly repugnant to Divine revelation, in which the preceding system says they are taught.

Revelation most certainly teaches us that there are persons in the Holy Trinity, Matt. iii. 16, 17 ; but it nowhere teaches us that there is any inequality among those persons ; for, “In this trinity none is AFORE or AFTER other ; none is GREATER or LESS than another ; for although there be one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost, yet the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is ALL ONE ; the glory EQUAL, the Majesty CO-ETERNAL ; for the whole three persons are CO-ETERNAL together, and CO-EQUAL.” Thus far the Athanasian creed is consistent with itself, and with the sacred oracles, and is point blank opposed to the Arian system, already pro-



duced, and to all refinements on that system of origination, begetting, proceeding, eternal Sonship, &c., which, properly analyzed, are fairly deducible to the three degrees in the above Arian scale of spiritual essences ; yet this creed in other places, in contradiction to the above, countenances those spurious doctrines.\*

But I have intimated above, that this doctrine is intended to oppose all sacrificial merit in the passion and death of Christ, while it allows him a moral merit, in consequence of which God gives the covenant of salvation to the Gentiles, and pardons, sanctifies, and saves all who believe the Christian revelation, and lead a holy life. This is specious, but radically unsolid. Its imposing aspect has deceived many, as it seems to magnify the Lord Jesus, while it strips him of every kind of merit, but that which he has as a righteous and holy man. This is by no means the view which the sacred Scriptures give us of the merit of Christ, in his passion and death ; and appears to me both defective and dangerous.

This scheme has got its best support and highest colouring from Dr. J. Taylor, whom I have often quoted in other places, with deserved approbation and delight, but to whom I must refer here with widely opposite feelings. From his "Introduction to the Apostolic

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\* This Creed, far from being a work of Athanasius, to whom it does not appear to have been attributed before the seventh century, is probably not the work of any Greek Father. All the ancient copies of it are Latin ; and the Greek copies of it are evidently translated from them, and are of no antiquity. The Benedictines have proved that it is not the work of Athanasius, and think it was written in France. They have entered it at the end of their edition, among the *Spuria*. When, where, or by whom it was written, no man knows. I wish, as Archbishop Tillotson said, "we were well rid of it."

Writings" I collect the following extracts, which contain at least the fair outlines of his scheme.

"God," says he, "grounded the extraordinary favours enjoyed by the Israelites, on Abraham's faith and obedience, and selected them out of respect to the piety and virtue of their ancestors."—p. 4.

"Jesus Christ, having assumed a human body, exhibited a pattern of the most perfect obedience, even unto death, in firm adherence to the truth he taught; and in consequence of this, he is a pattern of *reward*, by being raised from the dead; and having a *commission* to raise all mankind, and to put all into the possession of eternal life who shall in the last day be found virtuous and holy."—Ib., p. 25.

"The *blood* of Christ is the perfect *obedience* and *goodness* of Christ; nor is the blood of Christ to be considered only in relation to our Lord's death and sufferings, as if mere death or suffering were, in itself, of such a nature as to be pleasing or acceptable to God. But his blood implies a *character*; and it is his blood, as he is 'a Lamb without spot and blemish,' 1 Pet. i. 19 (that is, as he is perfectly holy), which is so great value in the sight of God. His blood is the same as his 'offering himself without spot to God;' Heb. x. 14." Ib., p. 44.

"What Christ did was neither to incline God to be gracious, nor to disengage him from any counter-obligations, arising from law or justice, or what the sinner's case might deserve; but what Christ did and suffered was a proper and wise *expedient*, a *fit ground*, and *method* of granting mercy to the world."—Ib., p. 47.

"When I say Christ's love and obedience is a just foundation of the divine grace, I know not how to explain myself better than by the following instance:

There have been masters willing, now and then, to grant a relaxation from study, or even to remit deserved punishment, in case any one boy, in behalf of the whole school, or of the offender, would compose and present a distich or copy of Latin verses ; and one may say that the kind verse-maker purchased the favour in both cases ; or that his learning, ingenuity, industry, goodness, and compliance with the governor's will and pleasure, was a just ground or foundation of the pardon and refreshment, or a proper reason of granting them."—*Ib.*, p. 49, note.

"Agreeably to this scheme, Abraham is proposed as a bright example of obedience and reward ; and his obedience is given as the reason of conferring blessings upon his posterity ; and particularly of having the Messiah, the Redeemer, and greatest blessings of mankind, descend from him."—*Ib.*, p. 50.

From all this most exceptionable, most meagre, and inefficient scheme of salvation, we gather that, as God called Abraham from his Gentilism, revealed to him the knowledge of his name and nature, and made him eminent for piety and probity, that he might constitute him the head of a numerous posterity, whom he could bless, protect, and save in the most extraordinary manner, on account of the rewardable righteousness and merit of their progenitor ; so he has sent Jesus Christ to enlighten and instruct the whole world, Jews and Gentiles ; a person, who in every respect did the will of God, and was obedient to the divine will, even unto death ; and who therefore, like "the kind verse-maker," in the preceding illustrative instance (which appears to have been made for the purpose), may be said to have purchased the favour of God for the offending world ; so that his super-eminent goodness and compliance with the will of the

supreme Governor is a just ground and foundation of pardon and salvation to the world, and a proper reason for granting them !

This is a sort of rewardable moral merit, in reference to the world; just similar to that of Abraham, in behalf of the Jewish people, from which every idea of sacrificial merit and atonement is excluded. On this ground the martyred Isaiah, and the massacred Baptist, might have afforded to the benevolence of God a sufficient ground and proper reason for the remission of the sins of men ; for as the life of one man is as much, personally considered, as the life of another ; and obedience unto death as much marked the conduct of the evangelical prophet, of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, and the holy Baptist, as that of our blessed Lord, if divested of his Godhead and eternity, as this scheme supposes ; might not they or any of them have been as complete a ground why God should forgive the sins of the world, as the obedient life and death of Christ ? Again, if Abraham's merit could extend to the whole Jewish race, why not to the Gentiles, in whose behalf chiefly the covenant was made ? for it was made with him while yet uncircumcised ; and the pledge on God's part was, that "in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed." Now, if this will hold good on the above reasoning, what need was there of the miraculous conception, the agony and bloody sweat, the cross and passion, the death and burial, the glorious resurrection and ascension of the blessed Jesus ? Why such an extraordinary expenditure of means and energies ? Why such an apparatus of prophecy, legal ordinances, sacrificial institutions, and miraculous interpositions ; to keep in view the divine purpose ; to commemorate the facts by which it was prefigured ; to preserve the regal line from which the promised seed

was to issue ; and finally, to exhibit it to the world ; if so much less, so indescribably less, might have accomplished the purpose ? Was not all this

“ Just like an ocean into tempest tossed,  
To waft a feather, or to drown a fly ? ”

But to see more fully the utter inefficacy of this pretendedly sufficient moral merit, let us hear what our Lord says in the text : “ God gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish.” Was anything like this ever addressed to the Jews, in reference to Abraham ? Were they ever promised remission of sins, provided they believed on this friend of God ? Were they ever commanded to believe on him at all ? Were they not ever led to consider that their sacrifices, where the life-blood of the animal was poured out in behalf of the offerer, were the grand cause of the remission of deserved punishment, and the forgiveness of sin ? Did they not know that without shedding of blood there was no remission ; and that the sacrificial code was the essential part of the Jewish system ? And do not we see, from the concurrent testimony both of the Old and New COVENANTS, that all these sacrifices typified the offering of the life of Jesus Christ upon the cross, by which he obtained eternal redemption for us ; so that he who believeth on him, as having “ died for his offences, and risen again for his justification, is freely justified from all things, from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses ? ”

I contend, therefore, that this one circumstance, the command to believe on Christ crucified for the remission of sins, even leaving his Godhead entirely out of the question, utterly destroys the pretended parallelism between Abraham and Jesus, and completely saps, sub-

verts, and ruins this splendid edifice. It is to that faith which credits, trusts to, and relies upon the meritorious blood (τιμιω αἵματι) of our Lord Jesus, which he sweat in the garden, and poured out upon the cross, as a full atonement and sacrifice for sin, that pardon and eternal glory are promised, and promised not on account of the merit of the *faith*, but the merit of the *sacrifice* which faith has apprehended.

VI. This brings me to the last thing proposed, viz., That they who thus believe receive a double merit: 1. They are exempted from eternal *perdition*—"That they should not perish." 2. They are brought to eternal *glory*—"That they should have everlasting life."

I have stated that this double benefit proves, 1. That man is *guilty*, and therefore exposed to punishment and perdition. 2. That he is *unholy*, and therefore unfit for glory.

1. "That they should not perish," *ἵνα μὴ ἀποληται*. Though we generally connect the idea of eternal destruction with the word *perish*, and use it to signify to *run into decay* or *ruin*, to be *cut off*, to be *killed*, to *die*, and to be *annihilated*; yet the literal meaning of the word is simple; it is compounded of *per*, *by* or *through*, and *eo*, *I go*, and signifies no more than "passing out of sight." So in Isai. lvii. 1, "The righteous perisheth," *justus perit*. Thus it signifies to be "removed by death," to "pass out of sight" into the invisible world, or paradise of God.

The original word is compounded of *απο*, intensive, and *ολλυμι* or *ολλυω*, to destroy, to kill, to lose; hence the word *απολλυμι* signifies "to be utterly lost;" not implying any extinction of being, but the rendering that being useless; totally defeating the end and purpose of life.

As God created man for himself, and to be finally happy with himself; and he cannot be united to him unless he be holy; he that sins, and neglects the means of his recovery, loses the end of his living; he also passes by from the sight of men; he goes into the invisible world; but it is the blackness of darkness for ever. He is not annihilated; even his body rises in the great day; but his resurrection is to shame and everlasting contempt. He goes to hell, the place of the perdition of ungodly men; and there his worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. This is what the Scripture means by perdition or perishing; this is the portion of the sinner who dies unsaved; and it was to prevent this that Jesus Christ shed his sacrificial blood. As man is a sinner, he is in danger of this perdition; for this is the punishment which the divine justice has awarded to transgression: and from this punishment, he who, with a penitent heart, believes, as before described, on the Son of God, is saved, being truly justified from all things; and shall not thus perish. This is the first part of the benefit.

But, secondly, he is to have *eternal life*. His being will not only be continued, but his well-being shall be secured: he shall be fitted for and received into glory. This is called *everlasting life*, ζῶντι αἰώνιον, “the life that always lives,” q. d., αἰῶν, it is always in being. In a word, it is eternal; for as the design of God was to unite men eternally to himself; and he is the Author and Source of life; consequently he who is made holy, and is thus united to God, ever lives in and by this eternal life. This is a life that cannot perish, a life that can never know decay.

2. Thus we see, 1. That as man is guilty, he needs that pardon which preserves from the punishment of perdition. 2. As he is impure and unholy in his nature,

he needs to be washed, to be cleansed from all unrighteousness, and made a partaker of the divine nature ; have the very thoughts of his heart cleansed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that he may be fit to dwell with God for ever and ever. His being sanctified throughout body, soul, and spirit, prepares him for this state ; and this is the second part of the double benefit which he receives by believing on Christ Jesus.

3. This double benefit comprises the two grand doctrines relative to salvation, which enter into almost every Christian's creed :—

1. JUSTIFICATION, or the pardon of sin ; through which we are no longer obnoxious to punishment, and are therefore saved from perdition.

2. SANCTIFICATION, or the purification of the soul from all unrighteousness, by which it is prepared for eternal glory. Without justification or pardon, it must perish ; without sanctification or holiness, it cannot see God.

The first of these great works is usually attributed to the shedding of Christ's blood, Acts xx. 28 ; Rom. v. 9. See also Eph. i. 7 ; Col. i. 14 ; Heb. ix. 12. The second, to the infusion of his Spirit, 2 Thess. ii. 13 ; 1 Pet. i. 2 ; Rom. xv. 16. But this very Spirit comes through Christ ; and is therefore called the Spirit of Christ, and the gift of Christ, John xv. 26, xvi. 7 ; and comes from the Father in the name of Christ, John xiv. 16, 26. And his gifts and graces were to be communicated in consequence of Christ's final triumph, John vii. 39 ; Acts ii. 33 ; Eph. iv. 8.

Now we must not suppose that these two blessings are so necessarily connected, that one must follow the other. Justification, or pardon of sin, implies no more in itself than the removal of that guilt and condemnation



which exposed the sinner to eternal perdition. This, in itself, gives no right to eternal glory.

Sanctification, or complete holiness, is a meetness for glory ; but neither does it give any right to heaven. Pardon of sin, as an act of God's mercy, does not imply the purification of the soul : the first removes the guilt, the second takes away the disposition that led to those acts of transgression by which this guilt was contracted.

Who supposes that the king, when, through his royal prerogative and clemency, he pardons a man who has been capitally convicted of forgery, takes as fully away the covetous principle which led him to commit the act, as by his pardon he takes away his liability to the punishment of the gallows ? I produce this instance merely to show, that pardon and holiness are not so necessarily connected, as that one must imply the other. Yet there is every reason to believe, and genuine experience in divine things confirms it, that in the act of justification, when the Spirit of God, the Spirit of holiness, is given to bear witness with our spirits that we are the children of God, all the outlines of the divine image are drawn upon the soul ; and it is the work of the Holy Spirit, in our sanctification, to touch off and fill up all those outlines, till every feature of the divine likeness is filled up and perfected. Therefore, no believer should ever rest till he find the whole body of sin and death destroyed ; and till the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus have made him free from the law of sin and death.

I have said that neither justification nor sanctification gives a right to glory. Mere innocence is not entitled to reward ; and mere meetness for a thing or place is no proof of right to possession. The fact is, that the right to that glory comes merely by Jesus Christ, and is the

effect of his infinite merit; and here the excellence and perfection of that merit appear. The merit must be infinite that can rescue the soul from deserved endless punishment; the merit must be infinite that can give a man a title to eternal glory. Now the text states, that an exemption from endless torments, and a title to and meetness for eternal glory, come by Christ, as the gifts of God's love. And as to be saved from eternal perdition is of infinite value to an immortal soul; and as the enjoyment of God, in his own heavens, throughout eternity, is of infinite worth; and both these are attributed to Christ's giving himself for us; therefore Christ's merit must be infinite, and it could not be so were he not properly and essentially God. Thus we are led back to the point from which we set out; and the postulates on the premises amount to demonstration in the conclusion. We were obliged to commence with the deity of Christ; as most obviously nothing less could have been adequate to the work which was given him to do; and the work which he has done, and the blessings which he has acquired, demonstrate his infinite merit, and thus prove the point of his essential divinity.

I have only one word to add to what has already been said; and that shall refer to the incomprehensibility of that love which induced God to give his Son for the redemption of the world. "God so loved the world," says the text, οὕτω ἠγαπήσεν ὁ Θεός: no description of this love is here attempted; its length, breadth, depth, and height are like the nature of that God in whom it resides; all indescribable, because all incomprehensible. To the same subject the apostle recurs, 1 Epist. iii. 1: "Behold *what manner* of love, ποταπὴν ἀγάπην, the Father hath *bestowed* upon us!" In the οὕτω, *so*, of the gospel, and the ποταπὴν, *what manner*, of the epistle,

God has put an eternity of meaning ; and has left a subject for everlasting contemplation, wonder, and praise to angels and men ; for though not directly interested in the subject, yet “these things the angels desire to look into.” And to see them in all their relations, connexions, and endlessly continued results, would be sufficient to constitute a heaven of heavens to all beatified spirits, were there no other subjects relative to creation, providence, and the economy of grace, to be investigated in a future state.

I shall now conclude with the principles with which I commenced. From the text, and the reasonings on it, it appears evident,—

1. That the world—the whole human race, was in a ruinous condemned state, in danger of perishing everlastingly ; and without power to rescue itself from the impending destruction.

2. That God, through the impulse of his own infinite love and innate goodness, provided for its rescue and salvation, by giving his only-begotten Son to die for it.

3. That the sacrificial death of Jesus was the only means by which the redemption of the world could have been effected ; and such is the nature of this Sacrifice, that it is absolutely sufficient to accomplish this gracious design ; nothing greater could be given, and nothing less could have been availing.

4. That sin is an inconceivable evil, and possesses an indescribable malignity ; when it required no less a sacrifice to make atonement for it than that offered by God manifested in the flesh.

5. That no man is saved through this Sacrifice but he who believes ; i. e., who credits what God has spoken concerning this Christ :—his sacrifice ; the end for which

it was offered ; and the way in which it is to be applied, in order to its becoming effectual.

6. That they who believe secure a double benefit :  
1. They are exempted from eternal perdition—"that they should not perish." 2. They are brought to eternal glory,—"that they should have everlasting life ;" this double benefit proving, 1. That man is guilty, is exposed to punishment, and needs pardon. 2. That man is impure and unholy, and therefore unfit for the glory of God. 3. That the merit must be infinite which procured for a fallen world such ineffable privileges ; and, 4. That man owes to God his Creator, to God his Redeemer, and to God his Sanctifier, the utmost gratitude, the most affectionate obedience, and unbounded praises throughout eternity.

Therefore, "to Him who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen !"

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